

MONTANA AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE STATUS ASSESSMENT, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND CONSERVATION PLAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS
(Report sections are hyperlinked)

Suggested Citation	1
Acknowledgements	2
Table of Contents	3
Executive Summary	6
Accessing Information in this Conservation Plan	6
Background	7
Highest Priority Issues for the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles	9
Checklist of Montana’s Amphibian and Reptile Species	11
Taxonomy and Common and Scientific Names	11
Documented Native Amphibian Species	11
Documented Native Reptile Species	12
Potential Native Species Currently Unconfirmed in Montana	13
Exotic Species Successfully Breeding in Montana	13
Species Successfully Breeding in Montana for Which There is Uncertainty About Their Status as Natives or Exotics	13
Exotic Species Documented in Montana for Which There is No Evidence of Successful Breeding	14
Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles in Various Land Management Regions in Montana	15
NatureServe and Heritage Program Ranks	15
State Rank Criteria for Montana Animal Species of Concern	16
Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles on National Forests in Montana	29
Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles on BLM Lands in Montana	32
Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles on Tribal Lands in Montana	35
Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles Within Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Wildlife Regions in Montana	38
Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles on USFWS Refuges in Montana	41
General Habitat Associations for Amphibians in Montana	44
General Habitat Associations for Reptiles in Montana	45
Laws and Regulations Applicable to Amphibians and Reptiles in Montana	46
Federal Laws and Regulations	46
Tribal Regulations	46
Portions of Montana Code Annotated Relevant to Nongame and Endangered Species	47
Portions of Montana Code Annotated Relevant to Importation, Introduction, and Translocation of Wildlife	52

<u>Review of Literature Relevant to the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in General</u>	60
<u>Ecological Function and Importance of Amphibians and Reptiles</u>	60
<u>Amphibian and Reptile Biology and Disturbance Regimes Relevant to Management</u>	61
<u>Global Amphibian Declines</u>	62
<u>Timber Harvest</u>	64
<u>Livestock Grazing</u>	67
<u>Fire and Fire Management Activities</u>	69
<u>Nonindigenous Species and Their Management</u>	71
<u>Road and Trail Development and On- and Off-Road Vehicle Use</u>	76
<u>Development and Management of Water Impoundments and Recreational Facilities</u>	79
<u>Harvest and Commerce</u>	82
<u>Habitat Fragmentation and Metapopulation Impacts</u>	83
<u>Literature Cited</u>	85
 <u>Introduction to Species Accounts</u>	 101
 <u>Species Accounts for Species Documented in Montana</u>	 102
Amphibians	
<u>Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>)</u>	102
<u>Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>)</u>	118
<u>Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon atterimus</i>)</u>	139
<u>Coeur d'Alene Salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>)</u>	145
<u>Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>)</u>	155
<u>Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)</u>	169
<u>Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)</u>	181
<u>Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>)</u>	208
<u>Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>)</u>	217
<u>Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)</u>	231
<u>Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>)</u>	247
<u>American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)</u>	262
<u>Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)</u>	281
<u>Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)</u>	303
Reptiles	
<u>Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>)</u>	330
<u>Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>)</u>	352
<u>Spiny Softshell (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>)</u>	385
<u>Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>)</u>	396
<u>Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)</u>	404
<u>Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>)</u>	417
<u>Western Fence Lizard (<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>)</u>	428
<u>Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>)</u>	434
<u>Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>)</u>	441
<u>Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)</u>	450
<u>Western Hog-nosed Snake (<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>)</u>	465
<u>Smooth Greensnake (<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>)</u>	476

<u>Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>)</u>	484
<u>Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)</u>	496
<u>Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>)</u>	516
<u>Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>)</u>	540
<u>Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)</u>	553
<u>Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)</u>	587
 <u>Species Accounts for Amphibian and Reptile Species Potentially Present In Montana</u>	618
<u>Great Basin Spadefoot (<i>Spea intermontana</i>)</u>	618
<u>Canadian Toad (<i>Bufo hemiophrys</i>)</u>	621
<u>Wood Frog (<i>Rana sylvatica</i>)</u>	625
<u>Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma douglasii</i>)</u>	628
 <u>Contact Information for Montana’s Amphibian and Reptile Working Group</u>	630
 Field Data Forms	
<u>Site Data Form for Lentic Breeding Amphibian and Aquatic Reptile Surveys</u>	632
<u>Roadside Amphibian Calling Survey Datasheet</u>	636
<u>Data Form for Reptile Site Surveys</u>	638
<u>Incidental Observation Datasheet</u>	641

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Accessing Information in this Conservation Plan

This document summarizes a great deal of information on the distribution, status, and biology of amphibians and reptiles known or thought to potentially inhabit Montana and is intended to become a dynamic living document that can be updated on a regular basis from research conducted in Montana or elsewhere. The document will be posted on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/reports.asp> as well as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy website at <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/cfwcs/swg/planning.html>

The document begins with taxonomic [checklists](#) for amphibians and reptiles that: (1) have been documented as native species; (2) are potentially present as native species; (3) have been documented as exotic species successfully reproducing in the state; (4) have been documented as successfully reproducing in the state but for which there is uncertainty about their status as native or exotic species; and (5) have been documented in the state but for which there is no evidence of successful reproduction.

[Presence and status ranks](#) for amphibians and reptiles are then summarized for various land management regions in Montana and background information is provided as to why species were assigned these ranks and what the associated management implications are for each state, federal, or tribal agency. Status ranks are described for Global Ranks (G ranks) assigned to species by NatureServe and State Ranks (S ranks) assigned to species by the Montana Natural Heritage Program because they are often used by federal and state agencies when they are developing their own special status ranks for species they will give special protections or considerations in land use planning. Status ranks and summaries of distribution and/or site occupancy rates from recent amphibian inventory surveys are provided for: (1) Region 1 National Forests; (2) Bureau of Land Management Field Offices; (3) tribal reservations; (4) Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Regions; and (5) National Wildlife Refuges or refuge complexes.

[General habitat associations](#) are then summarized in tables listing major habitat types and all of the amphibian and reptile species that are typically found in these habitats.

[Laws and regulations applicable to Montana's amphibians and reptiles](#) are then summarized, including federal laws and regulations, tribal regulations, portions of Montana Code Annotated relevant to nongame and endangered species, and portions of Montana Code Annotated relevant to importation, introduction, and translocation of wildlife.

[A review of literature relevant to conservation of amphibians and reptiles](#) includes sections on (1) ecological function and importance of amphibians and reptiles, (2) amphibian and reptile biology and disturbance regimes relevant to management, (3) risk factors relevant to the viability of amphibian and reptile populations including: (a) global amphibian declines; (b) timber harvest; (c) grazing; (d) fire and fire management activities; (e) nonindigenous species and their management; (f) road and trail development and on- and off-road vehicle use; (g) development and management of recreational facilities and water impoundments; (h) harvest and commerce;

and (i) habitat fragmentation and metapopulation impacts. This review is currently somewhat biased toward amphibians, both because of the much higher recent concern over the status of amphibians and because this literature review drew from previous efforts focused on amphibians.

[Accounts for individual species](#) then summarize what is known about the species' distribution, taxonomy, maximum documented elevation, habitat use and natural history, and conservation status. Sections on identification of various life history stages and priority research and management issues are also included. Finally, an attempt was made to compile a complete bibliography of published and gray literature for each species in order to provide everyone easy access to this information. These accounts are intended to be updated on a regular basis in order to provide everyone access to the latest information.

A [contact list for members of the Montana Amphibian and Reptile Working Group](#) is included in order to promote communication between agency biologists, resource managers, students, researchers, and anyone interested in the conservation of amphibians and reptiles in Montana.

An [overview of the statewide inventory and monitoring program for amphibians and reptiles](#) provides background information on the sampling schemes used, methods used for surveys, and the [survey forms used for a variety of amphibian inventory work](#).

[Watershed summaries for the lentic breeding amphibian and aquatic reptile surveys](#) complete the current version of this report in order to provide resource managers easy access to this information. Georeferenced site photos associated with this inventory work have been posted on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website which can be accessed at: <http://mtnhp.org>

It is recommended that users of this document first use the tables at the beginning of the document to identify management status, likelihood of a species presence in the area of interest, and the complement of species that are typically found in each general habitat type. Users should then examine individual species accounts in order gain a more thorough understanding of a species distribution, status, resource needs, factors that may pose a threat to population viability, and management actions that may mitigate these threats. Finally, users can review results of field surveys contained in individual watershed reports or see up-to-date distribution information for each species on the Montana Natural Heritage TRACKER website at: <http://mtnhp.org>

Background

There are only 13 amphibian species and 17 reptile species currently documented as native to Montana. Yet these species play important ecological roles in transferring energy up the food chain and shaping terrestrial and aquatic communities and they may serve as valuable bioindicators of the health of certain environments. This relatively low species diversity, relative to other portions of the United States and the world, highlights the need for a thorough understanding of the conservation status of these species because Montana has relatively few species to carry out these important ecological functions.

Until recently, there has been very little information available on the distribution, status, and biology of the majority of the amphibian and reptile species in Montana. As recently as the year 2000 there were only approximately 6,000 observation records for these species in the statewide Point Observation Database housed at the Montana Natural Heritage Program and a number of species were documented in the state fewer than 40 times. Much of the state lacked baseline surveys for amphibians and reptiles until the mid 1990s and some of the best information available for some regions still dates back to the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805 and 1806 or information gathered by naturalists associated with various military, road, or railroad surveys in the 1850s through 1870s. Understanding of the status of amphibians and reptiles in Montana was greatly advanced in the 1960s and 1970s through the work of students and faculty at the University of Montana and Montana State University. Among other things, their work documented healthy populations of Western Toads (*Bufo boreas*) and Northern Leopard Frogs (*Rana pipiens*) in western Montana. Baseline surveys for amphibians and reptiles were undertaken on a number of federal and tribal lands in the mid 1990s by Kirwin Werner, Jim Reichel, and Paul Hendricks in response to evidence that these and other amphibian species had undergone declines in Montana and around the world. These surveys filled in large gaps in our understanding of the distribution and status of a number of amphibian and reptile species and compiled evidence that populations of Western Toads had undergone declines and populations of Northern Leopard Frogs had been virtually extirpated from their former range in western Montana since the late 1970s.

These findings, as well as documented declines in amphibian populations around the world, spurred the development of several documents that compiled information on the status, distribution, and biology of amphibians and reptiles in Montana. These documents include: (1) [Management of Montana's Amphibians](#) (Maxell 2000) which developed species accounts for Montana amphibians that included information on identification, distribution, taxonomy, natural history, status, and conservation; (2) [Herpetology in Montana](#) (Maxell et al. 2003) which summarized the history of herpetology in Montana and provided checklists, dichotomous keys, dot distribution maps, maximum elevation records, a summary of museum voucher records, and indexed bibliographies for all amphibian and reptile species; and (3) the first [field guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Montana](#) (Werner et al. 2004) which provided user friendly keys, numerous photos, contact information for federal, state, and tribal agencies associated with the management of amphibians and reptiles, information on actions to be taken in case of being bitten by a Prairie Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), and detailed species accounts that summarize identification, taxonomy, distribution, habitat use, behavior, and development for each of Montana's amphibians and reptiles.

In addition to concerns about the status of Western Toads and Northern Leopard Frogs, the compilation of information in these summary documents also indicated reasons for concern about the status of populations of Coeur d'Alene Salamander (*Plethodon idahoensis*), Plains Spadefoot (*Spea bombifrons*), Great Plains Toad (*Bufo cognatus*), Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Spiny Softshell (*Apalone spinifera*), Greater Short-horned Lizards (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*), Common Sagebrush Lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*), Northern Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria coerulea*), Western Skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*), Western Hog-nosed Snake (*Heterodon nasicus*), Smooth Greensnake (*Opheodrys vernalis*), and Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*). For each of these species, a lack of recent records and/or a lack of adequate

baseline inventory data raises numerous questions about their status and distribution. It was clearly beyond the power of the available information to identify whether populations of most of these species were stable or had undergone declines. However, for at least one species, Greater Short-horned Lizard, lack of records in recent decades indicate that declines have taken place in at least a portion of their range due, at least in part, to wholesale conversion of native habitats to agricultural lands.

Coupled with growing evidence for declines in numerous amphibian, and some reptile, populations around the world, the concerns raised by these documents spurred the development of a statewide inventory and monitoring program for lentic breeding amphibians collaboratively funded by the Region 1 Office of the U.S. Forest Service, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's State Wildlife Grants Program, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's EPA wetland grants program, the Montana State Office of the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Geological Surveys' Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative. This collaborative effort was facilitated by a common statewide sampling scheme that allowed each agency to contribute to portions of the overall effort. This common statewide lentic breeding amphibian sampling scheme has also prompted inventory efforts on private lands to be performed using the same survey methodology and the same data forms so that all information is compatible. Furthermore, these efforts have lead to a number of 3-day workshops in which agency biologists have received training on: (1) the identification, status, and basic natural history of all of Montana's amphibians and reptiles; (2) methodologies used to survey for Montana's amphibians and reptiles; (3) how to record data on incidental observations or formal surveys for amphibians and reptiles; (4) transferring survey and incidental observation data to central databases at the Montana Natural Heritage Program; and (5) how to access and use incidental information or information gathered under the common sampling effort in regional and local project level planning decisions.

Highest Priorities for the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in Montana

Huge holes still exist in our understanding of the status, distribution, and biology of the amphibian and reptile species that have been definitively documented in the state. There is probably no better testimony to this than the recent confirmation that populations of the Idaho Giant Salamander (*Dicamptodon aterrimus*) do inhabit portions of western Montana or the possibility that 3 additional amphibian species (Great Basin Spadefoot (*Spea intermontana*), Canadian Toad (*Bufo hemiophrys*), and Wood Frog (*Rana sylvatica*)) and 1 additional reptile species (Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma douglassi*)) may still be identified as native to the state.

The following priority actions for the conservation of amphibians and reptiles in Montana were deemed to be among the highest priority issues identified under the research and management sections of individual species accounts.

1. A statewide systematic survey for terrestrial reptiles using a common sampling scheme. designed to identify proportions of habitat patches occupied as a measure of status and that allows individual agencies to contribute to portions of the overall effort.
2. Conduct systematic lentic breeding amphibian surveys on Tribal and private lands in the near future when the public land baseline surveys have been completed.

3. Complete baseline surveys for Coeur d'Alene Salamanders at springs, seeps, and waterfall spray zones in western Montana.
4. Implement control measures for introduced American Bullfrog populations, especially isolated populations, in order to reduce the risk of their spread and impacts on a variety of native wildlife.
5. Reintroductions of Northern Leopard Frogs throughout their historic range in western Montana (identify source populations and the best sites for reintroduction).
6. Focal surveys for Greater Short-horned Lizards, Pigmy Short-horned Lizards, and other reptile species in southwest Montana.
7. Focal surveys for Woodfrogs in the Bighorn Mountains on the Crow Indian Reservation.
8. Focal surveys for Plains Spadefoots and Northern Leopard Frogs in the mountain valleys of the upper Missouri River tributaries immediately east of the Continental Divide.
9. Evaluation of the frequency and intensity of disturbance associated with beaver created sites across Montana with the long-term goal of managing for a beaver population that will maintain lentic sites across Montana landscapes in order to provide habitat for amphibians, reptiles, and a variety of other wildlife.
10. Plan for fortuitous/adaptive amphibian call surveys across Montana in order to take advantage of proper weather conditions in order to better understand the status of species like the Great Plains Toad and Plains Spadefoot.
11. Focal studies on the basic natural history and population demography of a number of amphibian and reptile species in Montana.
12. Educate biologists, resource managers, and the general public about the biology and conservation of amphibians and reptiles in the state.

CHECKLISTS OF MONTANA'S AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE SPECIES

Taxonomy and Common and Scientific Names

Throughout this document common and scientific names used are consistent with those in the 5th edition of Scientific and Standard English Names of the Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico (Crother 2000, Crother et al. 2001, 2003). These have been used in preference to those in the 6th edition (Crother 2008) because they currently have more of a consensus among herpetologists and because changes in the 6th edition have been questioned by several authors as not adequately reflecting a consensus among herpetologists and unnecessary to reflect evolutionary history (e.g., Smith and Chiszar 2006, Hillis 2007, Wiens 2007).

DOCUMENTED NATIVE AMPHIBIAN SPECIES

Amphibians (Class Amphibia)

Salamanders (Order Caudata)

Mole Salamanders (Family Ambystomatidae)

Long-toed Salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*)

Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*)

Giant Salamanders (Family Dicamptodontidae)

Idaho Giant Salamanders (*Dicamptodon aterimus*)

Lungless Salamanders (Family Plethodontidae)

Coeur d'Alene Salamander (*Plethodon idahoensis*)

Frogs and Toads (Order Anura)

Tailed Frogs (Family Ascaphidae)

Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus montanus*)

Spadefoot Toads (Family Pelobatidae)

Plains Spadefoot (*Spea bombifrons*)

True Toads (Family Bufonidae)

Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*)

Great Plains Toad (*Bufo cognatus*)

Woodhouse's Toad (*Bufo woodhousii*)

Treefrogs (Family Hylidae)

Boreal Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris maculata*)

Pacific Treefrog (*Pseudacris regilla*)

True Frogs (Family Ranidae)

Columbia Spotted Frog (*Rana luteiventris*)

Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*)

DOCUMENTED NATIVE REPTILE SPECIES

Reptiles (Class Reptilia)

Turtles (Order Testudines)

Snapping Turtles (Family Chelydridae)

Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)

Pond Turtles (Family Emydidae)

Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*)

Softshell Turtles (Family Trionychidae)

Spiny Softshell (*Apalone spinifera*)

Lizards (Order Squamata, Suborder Lacertilia)

Alligator Lizards (Family Anguidae)

Northern Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria coerulea*)

Spiny Lizards (Family Phrynosomatidae)

Greater Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*)

Common Sagebrush Lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*)

Skinks (Family Scincidae)

Western Skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*)

Snakes (Order Squamata, Suborder Serpentes)

Boas (Family Boidae)

Rubber Boa (*Charina bottae*)

Colubrids (Family Colubridae)

Eastern Racer (*Coluber constrictor*)

Western Hog-nosed Snake (*Heterodon nasicus*)

Smooth Greensnake (*Opheodrys vernalis*)

Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*)

Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*)

Terrestrial Gartersnake (*Thamnophis elegans*)

Plains Gartersnake (*Thamnophis radix*)

Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

Vipers (Family Viperidae)

Prairie Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*)

POTENTIAL NATIVE SPECIES CURRENTLY UNCONFIRMED IN MONTANA

Amphibians (Class Amphibia)

Frogs and Toads (Order Anura)

Spadefoot Toads (Family Pelobatidae)

Great Basin Spadefoot (*Spea intermontana*)

True Toads (Family Bufonidae)

Canadian Toad (*Bufo hemiophrys*)

True Frogs (Family Ranidae)

Wood Frog (*Rana sylvatica*)

Reptiles (Class Reptilia)

Lizards (Order Squamata, Suborder Lacertilia)

Spiny Lizards (Family Phrynosomatidae)

Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma douglasii*)

EXOTIC SPECIES SUCCESSFULLY BREEDING IN MONTANA

Amphibians (Class Amphibia)

Frogs and Toads (Order Anura)

True Frogs (Family Ranidae)

American Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

SPECIES SUCCESSFULLY BREEDING IN MONTANA FOR WHICH THERE IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THEIR STATUS AS NATIVES OR EXOTICS

Reptiles (Class Reptilia)

Lizards (Order Squamata, Suborder Lacertilia)

Spiny Lizards (Family Phrynosomatidae)

Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*)

**EXOTIC SPECIES DOCUMENTED IN MONTANA FOR WHICH
THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL BREEDING**

Salamanders (Order Caudata)

Newts (Family Salamandridae)

Rough-skinned Newt (*Taricha granulosa*)

Turtles (Order Testudines)

Pond Turtles (Family Emydidae)

Mississippi Map Turtle (*Graptemys pseudogeographica kohnii*)

Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

Spiny Lizards (Family Phrynosomatidae)

Coast Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*)

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles in Various Land Management Regions in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Natureserve and Heritage Program Ranks

NatureServe and the international network of Natural Heritage Programs employ a standardized ranking system to denote global and state status. These ranks are often used by federal and state agencies in assigning their own special status ranks for species they will give special protections or considerations in land use planning. Under the NatureServe and Natural Heritage Program conservation data network, each species is given a global (G) rank, denoting range-wide status, and a state (S) rank for its status in Montana. Status ranks range from 1 (greatest concern) to 5 (least concern).

Global ranks are assigned by scientists at NatureServe (the international affiliate organization for the heritage network) in consultation with biologists in the natural heritage programs and other taxonomic experts. State ranks are determined jointly by Montana Natural Heritage Program and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks biologists in consultation with the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society, the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, and other experts (see ranking criteria below). Among other things, the combination of global and state ranks often helps describe the proportion of a species' range and/or total population occurring in Montana. For instance, a rank of G3 S3 often indicates that Montana comprises most or a very significant portion of an animal's total population. In contrast, an animal ranked G5 S1 often occurs in Montana at the periphery of its much larger range; thus, the state supports a relatively small portion of its total population.

In Montana, vertebrate species assigned a state rank of S1, S2, or S3 and invertebrate species assigned a state rank of S1 or S2 are included in the Montana Species of Concern report. The latest version of this report can be found at: <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/reports.asp> Designation of a species as a Montana Animal Species of Concern is not a statutory or regulatory classification. Instead, these designations provide a basis for resource managers and decision-makers to direct limited resources to priority data collection needs and address conservation needs proactively.

Definitions of NatureServe and Heritage Program Ranks

G1 / S1	At high risk because of extremely limited and/or rapidly declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G2 / S2	At risk because of very limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G3 / S3	Potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.
G4 / S4	Uncommon but not rare (although it may be rare in parts of its range), and usually widespread. Apparently not vulnerable in most of its range, but possibly cause for long-term concern.
G5 / S5	Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). Not vulnerable in most of its range.
SNA	Currently unranked at the state level.

State Rank Criteria for Montana Animal Species of Concern

The ranking criteria described below were used in developing state ranks for vertebrate animal species in Montana. Detailed definitions and guidance for use are provided individually for each criterion. Information from multiple reviewers was combined by MTNHP and MFWP staff to generate “compiled” responses to each criterion. The final state rank was then derived using the process described in Appendix A, with input and review from staff and other experts.

This methodology has been adapted for Montana from a process developed and proposed by scientists at NatureServe (the international affiliate for natural heritage programs), as documented in:

Master, L. L., L. E. Morse, A. S. Weakley, G. A. Hammerson, and D. Faber-Langendoen. 2003. NatureServe Conservation Status Assessment Criteria. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia, U.S.A.

Conservation Criteria

Population Size

Enter the code for the estimated current naturally occurring wild total population of the species within Montana. Count or estimate the number of individuals of reproductive age or stage (at an appropriate time of the year), including mature but currently non-reproducing individuals.

Guidance, consider the following points (from IUCN 2000) when estimating population numbers:

- *Mature individuals that will never produce new recruits should not be counted (e.g., densities are too low for fertilization) [But see note below regarding long-persisting nonreproductive clones.]*
- *In the case of populations with biased adult or breeding sex ratios it is appropriate to use lower estimates for the number of mature individuals, which take this into account (e.g., the estimated effective population size).*
- *Where the population size fluctuates use a lower estimate. In most cases this will be much less than the mean.*
- *Reproducing units within a clone should be counted as individuals, except where such units are unable to survive alone (e.g., corals).*
- *In the case of taxa that naturally lose all or a subset of mature individuals at some point in their life cycle, the estimate should be made at the appropriate time, when mature individuals are available for breeding.*
- *Re-introduced individuals must have produced viable offspring before they are counted as mature individuals*

Also consider:

- For species that produce more than one generation per year, use the size of the smallest annual reproducing generation in estimations.
- For seed-banking plants or other intermittently obvious organisms, consider population size to be the number of mature individuals in a typical "good" year, but not a "poor" year or an

extraordinarily productive year. Although data will rarely be available, population size for such species should be conceptually considered the median of the population over a 10-year or 3-generation (whichever is longer) time span.

- For clone-forming organisms that persist or spread locally but rarely if ever reproduce, consider the population size to be the number of distinct, self-maintaining clonal patches (approximating the number of genets), rather than the number of physiologically separate individuals (ramets).

Select from the following values:

Z = Zero, no individuals known extant

A = 1-50 individuals

B = 50-250 individuals

C = 250-1,000 individuals

D = 1,000-2,500 individuals

E = 2,500-10,000 individuals

F = 10,000-100,000 individuals

G = 100,000-1,000,000 individuals

H = >1,000,000 individuals

U = Unknown

Null = Rank factor not assessed

Range Extent / Area of Occupancy

Range extent is described by IUCN (2001) for taxa:

Extent of occurrence is defined as the area contained within the shortest continuous imaginary boundary that can be drawn to encompass all the known, inferred or projected sites of present occurrence of a taxon, excluding cases of vagrancy. This measure may exclude discontinuities or disjunctions within the overall distribution of a taxon (e.g. large areas of obviously unsuitable habitat) (but see 'area of occupancy').

Area of occupancy is described by IUCN (2001) for taxa as:

Area of occupancy is defined as the area within its 'extent of occurrence' (see definition), which is occupied by a taxon, excluding cases of vagrancy. The measure reflects the fact that a taxon will not usually occur throughout the area of its extent of occurrence, which may contain unsuitable or unoccupied habitats. In some cases (e.g. colonial nesting sites, feeding sites for migratory taxa) the area of occupancy is the smallest area essential at any stage to the survival of existing populations of a taxon. The size of the area of occupancy will be a function of the scale at which it is measured, and should be at a scale appropriate to relevant biological aspects of the taxon, the nature of threats and the available data.

Figure 1 illustrates the differences between range extent and area of occupancy.

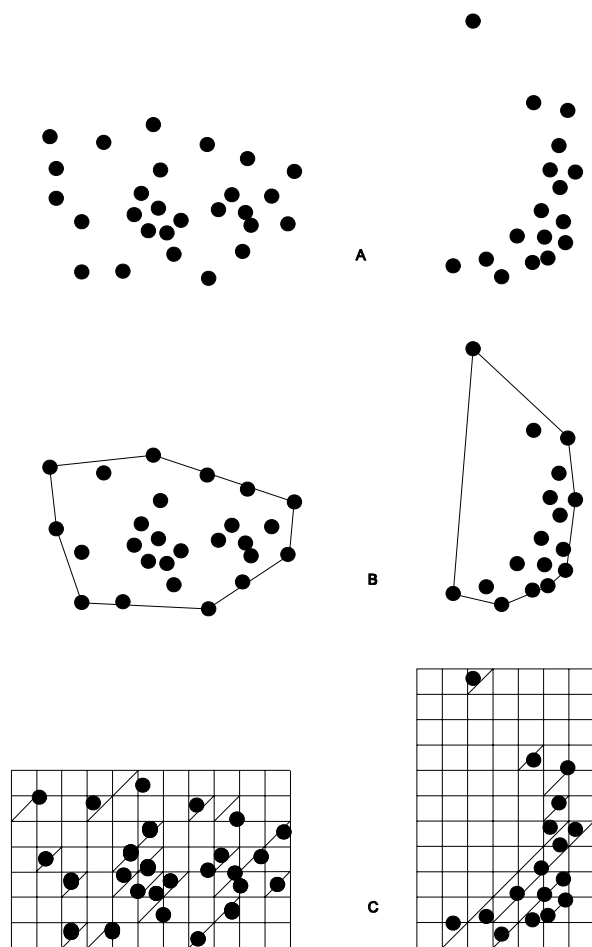


Figure 1. *Two examples of the distinction between range extent and area of occupancy. (A) Is the spatial distribution of known, inferred or projected sites of present occurrence. (B) Shows one possible boundary to the range extent, which is the measured area within this boundary using a minimum convex polygon. [Note that Burgman and Fox (2001) strongly recommend the use of α -hulls rather than minimum convex polygons to estimate range extent as otherwise significant overestimates (e.g., right side of example B) may result.] (C) Shows one measure of area of occupancy, which can be achieved by the sum of the occupied grid squares.*

(From IUCN 2001)

Range Extent

Enter the code that best describes the estimated current range of the species in Montana. See below for definitions of range extent (extent of occurrence) and for contrast of this with area of occupancy.

Select from the following values:

- Z = Zero (no occurrences believed extant)
- A = $<100 \text{ km}^2$ (less than about 40 square miles)
- B = $100\text{-}250 \text{ km}^2$ (about 40-100 square miles)
- C = $250\text{-}1,000 \text{ km}^2$ (about 100-400 square miles)
- D = $1,000\text{-}5,000 \text{ km}^2$ (about 400-2,000 square miles)
- E = $5,000\text{-}20,000 \text{ km}^2$ (about 2,000-8,000 square miles)
- F = $20,000\text{-}200,000 \text{ km}^2$ (about 8,000-80,000 square miles)
- G = $200,000\text{-}2,500,000 \text{ km}^2$ (about 80,000-1,000,000 square miles)
- U = Unknown
- Null = Rank factor not assessed

Area of Occupancy

Determine the code for the estimated current area of occupancy of the species in Montana. See above for differences between area of occupancy and range extent.

For species in linear habitats (e.g., riverine shoreline, or cliff-edge species), enter the code for the total length of all currently occupied habitat segments. Where better information is lacking, area can be estimated from a linear dimension by assuming an appropriate average width (e.g., 100 meters) for a linear habitat. If information on both occupied area and occupied length is available, use the one that results in the more restrictive value, but provide information on both in the comments field.

For migratory species, enter the code (area or length) that reflects the current area of occupancy (or length of occupied area) at the time of the year when occupancy is most restricted.

Select from the following values:

Area:

- Z = Zero (no occurrences believed extant)
- A = $<0.4 \text{ km}^2$ (less than about 100 acres)
- B = $0.4\text{-}4 \text{ km}^2$ (about 100-1,000 acres)
- C = $4\text{-}20 \text{ km}^2$ (about 1,000-5,000 acres)
- D = $20\text{-}100 \text{ km}^2$ (about 5,000-25,000 acres)
- E = $100\text{-}500 \text{ km}^2$ (about 25,000-125,000 acres)
- F = $500\text{-}2,000 \text{ km}^2$ (about 125,000-500,000 acres)
- G = $2,000\text{-}20,000 \text{ km}^2$ (500,000-5,000,000 acres)
- H = $>20,000 \text{ km}^2$ (greater than 5,000,000 acres)
- U = Unknown
- Null = Rank factor not assessed

Length:

- LZ = Zero (no occurrences believed extant)
- LA = $<4 \text{ km}$ (less than about 2.5 miles)
- LB = $4\text{-}40 \text{ km}$ (about 2.5-25 miles)
- LC = $40\text{-}200 \text{ km}$ (about 25-125 miles)
- LD = $200\text{-}1,000 \text{ km}$ (about 125-620 miles)
- LE = $1,000\text{-}5,000 \text{ km}$ (about 620-3,000 miles)
- LF = $5,000\text{-}20,000 \text{ km}$ (about 3,000-12,500 miles)
- LG = $20,000\text{-}200,000 \text{ km}$ (about 12,500-125,000 miles)
- LH = $>200,000 \text{ km}$ (greater than 125,000 miles)
- LU = Unknown
- Null = Rank factor not assessed

Long-term Trend

Enter the code that best describes the observed, estimated, inferred, or suspected degree of change in population size, extent of occurrence, area of occupancy, and/or number or condition of occurrences over the long term (ca. 200 years) in Montana. Specify in the comment field the time period for the change noted, as well as a longer-term view (e.g., back to European

exploration) if information is available. If there are data on more than one aspect, specify which aspect is most influential.

Select from the following values:

- A = Very Large Decline (decline of >90%, with <10% of population size, range extent, area occupied, and/or number or condition of occurrences remaining)
- B = Large Decline (decline of 75-90%)
- C = Substantial Decline (decline of 50-75%)
- D = Moderate Decline (decline of 25-50%)
- E = Relatively Stable ($\pm 25\%$ change)
- F = Increase (increase of >25%)
- U = Unknown. Long-term trend in population, range, area occupied, or number or condition of occurrences unknown
- Null = Rank factor not assessed

Short-term Trend

Enter the code that best describes the observed, estimated, inferred, suspected, or projected short-term trend in population size, extent of occurrence, area of occupancy, whichever most significantly affects the rank in Montana. Consider short-term historical trend within 10 years or 3 generations (for long-lived species), whichever is the longer (up to a maximum of 100 years).

The trend may be recent, current, or projected (based on recent past), and the trend may or may not be known to be continuing. Trends may be smooth, irregular or sporadic. Fluctuations will not normally count as trends, but an observed change should not be considered as merely a fluctuation rather than a trend unless there is evidence for this.

Specify what is known about various pertinent trends in the comment field, including trend information for particular factors, more precise information, regional trends, etc. Also comment, if known, on whether the causes of decline, if any, are understood, reversible, and/or ceased. If the trend is known not to be continuing, specify that in comments.

Select from the following values:

- A = Severely Declining. Decline of >70% in population, range, area occupied, and/or number or condition of occurrences
- B = Very Rapidly Declining. Decline of 50-70% in population, range, area occupied, and/or number or condition of occurrences
- C = Rapidly Declining. Decline of 30-50% in population, range, area occupied, and/or number or condition of occurrences
- D = Declining. Decline of 10-30% in population, range, area occupied, and/or number or condition of occurrences
- E = Stable. Population, range, area occupied, and/or number or condition of occurrences unchanged or remaining within $\pm 10\%$ fluctuation
- F = Increasing. Increase of >10% in population, range, area occupied, and/or number or condition of occurrences
- U = Unknown. Short-term trend in population, range, area occupied, and number and condition of occurrences unknown.
- Null = Rank factor not assessed

Threats (Severity, Scope, and Immediacy)

Indicate the degree to which the species is observed, inferred, or suspected to be directly or indirectly threatened in Montana (or throughout its range if it affects persistence in Montana). Use this field to evaluate the impact of extrinsic threats, which typically are anthropogenic but may be natural. The impact of human activity may be direct (e.g., destruction of habitat) or indirect (e.g., invasive species introduction). Effects of natural phenomena (e.g., fire, hurricane, flooding) may be especially important when the species is concentrated in few locations. Characteristics of the species that make it inherently susceptible to threats should be considered under the rank factor Intrinsic Vulnerability.

Threats considerations apply to the present and the future. Effects of past threats (whether or not continuing) should be addressed instead under the short-term trend and/or long-term trend factors. For species known only historically in the area of interest, but with significant likelihood of rediscovery in identifiable areas, current or foreseeable threats in those areas may be addressed here where appropriate if they would affect any extant (but unrecorded) occurrences of the species.

Threats may be observed, inferred, or projected to occur in the near term. They should be characterized in terms of severity (how badly and irreversibly the species population is affected), scope (what proportion of it is affected), and degree of imminence (how likely the threat is and how soon is it expected). "Magnitude" is sometimes used to refer to scope and severity collectively.

Consider threats collectively, and for the foreseeable threat with the greatest magnitude (severity and scope combined), rate the severity, scope, and immediacy each as High, Moderate, Low, Insignificant, or Unknown, as briefly defined below. Identify in the comment field the threat to which severity, scope, and immediacy pertains, and discuss additional threats identified, or interactions among threats, including any high-magnitude threats considered insignificant in immediacy.

Severity

High: Loss of species population (all individuals) or destruction of species habitat in area affected, with effects essentially irreversible or requiring long-term recovery (>100 years).

Moderate: Major reduction of species population or long-term degradation or reduction of habitat in Montana, requiring 50-100 years for recovery.

Low: Low but nontrivial reduction of species population or reversible degradation or reduction of habitat in area affected, with recovery expected in 10-50 years.

Insignificant: Essentially no reduction of population or degradation of habitat or ecological community due to threats, or populations, habitats, able to recover quickly (within 10 years) from minor temporary loss. Note that effects of locally sustainable levels of hunting, fishing, logging, collecting, or other harvest from wild populations are generally considered Insignificant as defined here.

Scope

High: > 60% of total population or area affected

Moderate: 20-60% of total population or area affected

Low: 5-20% of total population or area affected

Insignificant: < 5% of total population or area affected

Immediacy

High: Threat is operational (happening now) or imminent (within a year).

Moderate: Threat is likely to be operational within 2-5 years.

Low: Threat is likely to be operational within 5-20 years.

Insignificant: Threat not likely to be operational within 20 years.

The system will calculate a rank factor value of A, B, C, D, E, F, or G, as shown in Table 2 below. If two of the three parameters are known, the rank factor value will be calculated by treating the unknown (or not assessed [null]) parameter as "Low." If only one of the rank factors is rated (as High, Moderate, or Low), the resulting rank factor value will be "U" (unknown). If any of the three factors are considered "Insignificant," the resulting rank factor will be "H" (unthreatened)."

Threat values, calculated from scope, severity, and immediacy, or unknown, may be considered as follows.

- A = Substantial, imminent threat. Threat is moderate to severe and imminent for most (> 60%) of the population or area.
- B = Moderate and imminent threat. Threat is moderate to severe and imminent for a significant proportion (20-60%) of the population or area.
- C = Substantial, non-imminent threat. Threat is moderate to severe but not imminent (> 10 years) for most of the population or area.
- D = Moderate, non-imminent threat. Threat is moderate to severe but not imminent for a significant portion of the population or area.
- E = Localized substantial threat. Threat is moderate to severe for a small but significant proportion of the population or area.
- F = Widespread, low-severity threat. Threat is of low severity but affects (or would affect) most or a significant portion of the population or area.
- G = Slightly threatened. Threats, while recognizable, are of low severity, or affecting only a small portion of the population or area.
- H = Unthreatened. Threats if any, when considered in comparison with natural fluctuation and change, are minimal or very localized, not leading to significant loss or degradation of populations or area even over a few decades' time. (Severity, scope, and/or immediacy of threat considered Insignificant.)
- U = Unknown. The available information is not sufficient to assign degree of threat as above. (Severity, scope, and immediacy are all unknown, or mostly [two of three] unknown or not assessed [null].)
- Null = Rank factor not assessed, including instances in which the species is extinct (or extirpated from the area of interest).

Table 2. Calculation of Threats factor values from values for Severity, Scope, and Immediacy subfactors.

SEVERITY	SCOPE	IMMEDIACY	<u>VALUE</u>	DESCRIPTION
High High Moderate Moderate	High High High High	High Moderate High Moderate	= A	Moderate to severe, imminent threat for most (>60%) of population, occurrences, or area
High High Moderate Moderate	Moderate Moderate Moderate Moderate	High Moderate High Moderate	= B	Moderate to severe, imminent threat for a significant proportion (20-60%) of population, occurrences, or area
High Moderate	High High	Low Low	= C	Moderate to severe, non-imminent threat for most of population, occurrences, or area
High Moderate	Moderate Moderate	Low Low	= D	Moderate to severe, non-imminent threat for a significant proportion of population, occurrences, or area
High High High Moderate Moderate Moderate	Low Low Low Low Low Low	High Moderate Low High Moderate Low	= E	Moderate to severe threat for small proportion of population, occurrences, or area

Low	High	High	= F	Low severity threat for most or significant proportion of population, occurrences, or area
Low	High	Moderate		
Low	High	Low		
Low	Moderate	High		
Low	Moderate	Moderate		
Low	Moderate	Low		
Low	Low	High	= G	Low severity threat for a small proportion of population, occurrences, or area
Low	Low	Moderate		
Low	Low	Low		

Intrinsic Vulnerability

Enter the appropriate letter code for the observed, inferred, or suspected degree to which intrinsic or inherent factors of the species (such as life history or behavior characteristics of species) make it vulnerable or resilient to natural or anthropogenic stresses or catastrophes. Examples of such factors include reproductive rates and requirements, time to maturity, dormancy requirements, and dispersal patterns.

Since geographically or ecologically disjunct or peripheral populations may show additional vulnerabilities not generally characteristic of the species, these factors are to be assessed for the species throughout the area of interest, or at least for its better populations. Do not consider here such topics as population size, number of occurrences, area of occupancy, extent of occurrence, or environmental specificity; these are addressed as other ranking factors.

Note that the intrinsic vulnerability factors exist independent of human influence, but may make the species more susceptible to disturbance by human activities. The extent and effects of current or projected extrinsic influences themselves should be addressed in the Threat comments field.

Describe the reasons for your selection in the Intrinsic Vulnerability Comments field.

Select from the following values:

A = Highly Vulnerable. Species is slow to mature, reproduces infrequently, and/or has low fecundity such that populations are very slow (> 20 years or 5 generations) to recover from decreases in abundance; or species has low dispersal capability such that extirpated

populations are unlikely to become reestablished through natural recolonization (unaided by humans).

B = Moderately Vulnerable. Species exhibits moderate age of maturity, frequency of reproduction, and/or fecundity such that populations generally tend to recover from decreases in abundance over a period of several years (on the order of 5-20 years or 2-5 generations); or species has moderate dispersal capability such that extirpated populations generally become reestablished through natural recolonization (unaided by humans).

C = Not Intrinsically Vulnerable. Species matures quickly, reproduces frequently, and/or has high fecundity such that populations recover quickly (< 5 years or 2 generations) from decreases in abundance; or species has high dispersal capability such that extirpated populations soon become reestablished through natural recolonization (unaided by humans).

U = Unknown

Null = Rank factor not assessed

Environmental Specificity

Enter the appropriate letter code for the observed, inferred, or suspected vulnerability or resilience of the species due to habitat preferences or restrictions or other environmental specificity or generality. Describe the reasons for your selection in the Environmental Specificity field. Indicate in the comment field why environmental specificity affects vulnerability. This factor is most important when the number of populations and the range extent or area of occupancy are largely unknown.

Select from the following values:

A = Very Narrow. Specialist. Specific habitat(s), substrate(s), food type(s), hosts, breeding/nonbreeding microhabitats, or other abiotic and/or biotic factor(s) are used or required by the Element in the area of interest, with these habitat(s) and/or other requirements furthermore being scarce within the generalized range of the species within the area of interest, and, the population (or the number of breeding attempts) expected to decline significantly if any of these key requirements become unavailable.

B = Narrow. Specialist. Specific habitat(s) or other abiotic and/or biotic factors (see above) are used or required by the Element, but these key requirements are common and within the generalized range of the species within the area of interest.

C = Moderate. Generalist. Broad-scale or diverse (general) habitat(s) or other abiotic and/or biotic factors are used or required by the species but some key requirements are scarce in the generalized range of the species within the area of interest.

D = Broad. Generalist. Broad-scale or diverse (general) habitat(s) or abiotic and/or biotic factors are used or required by the species, with all key requirements common in the generalized range of the species in the area of interest. If the preferred food(s) or breeding/nonbreeding microhabitat(s) become unavailable, the species switches to an alternative with no resulting decline in numbers of individuals or number of breeding attempts.

U = Unknown

Null = Rank factor not assessed

Other Considerations

Provide and comment on any other information that should be considered in the assignment of a conservation status rank, especially when the status rank resulting from the overall assessment is different from the rank that the values for the formal status factors, taken alone, would suggest. This (text only) field may also be used for other general notes pertinent to multiple factors.

The following are some examples of Other Considerations:

- Preliminary rank assessment does not necessarily reflect current status, since the rank was done by inspection from review of published distribution and habitat information, or museum collection information.
- A population viability analysis may indicate that the species has x percent probability of surviving for y years (or an equivalent number of generations) in the same area of interest (globe, nation, or subnation).

**Conservation Status For Species:
A Rule- And Point-Based Process For Rank Assignment**

Adopted for Montana from a draft by– L. Master & T. Regan– 17 November 2001

A Quantitative approximation to assigning Heritage Ranks

The method for determining an SRank is a hybrid of rule based approaches and point scoring techniques. The method incorporates unknown data. To determine an Srank, first determine what information is available for the species. Use the following rationale along with the Status Assessment Factors presented in this document and the method for point allocation for each of the factors presented below to determine the classification.

- *Population size.* If the number of mature individuals is small, it may be appropriate to raise the priority by one-half rank or more. If there are many mature individuals, the priority may be lowered. [A=-1, B=-0.75, C=-0.5, D-E=-0.25, F=0, G=+0.25, H=+0.5, U=0]
- *Geographic distribution.* If a species' area of occupancy or extent of occurrence (= range extent) is relatively small, it is more vulnerable to negative effects from localized events. It may be appropriate to raise priority by one-quarter rank or more for a species with a narrow distribution and lower it by one-quarter to one-half rank for a widespread species. [Area of occupancy: A=-1, B=-0.75, C=-0.5, D=-.25, E=0, F=0, G=0, H=+0.25, U=0; or (whichever is greatest) Extent of occurrence: A-B=-0.5, C-D=-0.25; E-F-G-H=0, U=0]
- *Environmental specificity.* If a species requires highly specific habitat(s) or other abiotic or biotic factor(s), and if the number of populations and distribution is unknown, the rank may be raised or lowered. [A=-0.5, B & C=0, D=+0.5, U=0].
- *Short-term trends in population size, area of occupancy, extent of occurrence, or number or condition of occurrences.* A significant short term and non-cyclic negative trend may be reason to raise priority by one-quarter rank or more, or a significant positive trend may indicate that priority should be lowered by one-half rank. [A=-1, B=-0.75, C=-0.5, D=-0.25, E=0, F=+0.25, U=0] In the absence of short-term trend data, the rank may be raised or lowered for *long-term trends*. [A=-0.5, B=-0.25, C & D & E=0, F=+0.25, U=0]
- *Threats.* Threats include habitat destruction or degradation, introduction of exotic species, overexploitation and direct human-caused mortality, and elimination of natural disturbance regimes, such as fire or flooding. Depending on the severity, scope, and immediacy of threats, the priority may be raised or lowered by one-half to one rank. [A=-1, B=-0.75, C=-0.5, D=-0.25, E & F=0, G=+0.75, H=+1.0, U=0]
- *Intrinsic vulnerability.* If a species is intrinsically vulnerable because it is slow to mature, reproduces infrequently, and/or has low fecundity such that populations are very slow to recover from decreases in abundance, or is a species has low dispersal capability such that extirpated populations are unlikely to become reestablished through natural colonization, it may be appropriate to raise its priority. [A=-0.5, B=-0.25, C & U=0]

Step 1: Determine the available data for the species. The following subheadings are indicative of the types of data useful for classification (Refer to Heritage Conservation Status Assessment Factors for definitions of the following factors as noted in this document.

Population size

Geographic Distribution (Extent of Occurrence [EOO] or Area of Occupancy [AOO])

Environmental Specificity

Trends (short-term and long-term trends)

Threats (scope, severity, immediacy)

Management / Protection

Intrinsic Vulnerability

Step2: Determine which of the following combinations of the first five data requirements suits the available data (only choose one combination and the first to apply).

Pop size + Geographic Distribution (greatest value from EOO or AOO)

Pop size + Environmental Specificity

Population size

Geographic Distribution (EOO only; AOO unknown) and Environmental Specificity

Geographic Distribution (greatest value from EOO or AOO)

Environmental Specificity

Step 3: Start point allocation at 3.5. Using the point allocation document below, determine a value for the combination you choose and add or subtract if appropriate. If all six factors are unknown: points = 3.5

Step 4: Once a value has been determined for the first five data requirements, incorporate remaining data.

$P = \text{points (total from step 3)} + \text{trends (short term trend otherwise use Long term trend)} + \text{threats}$

OR

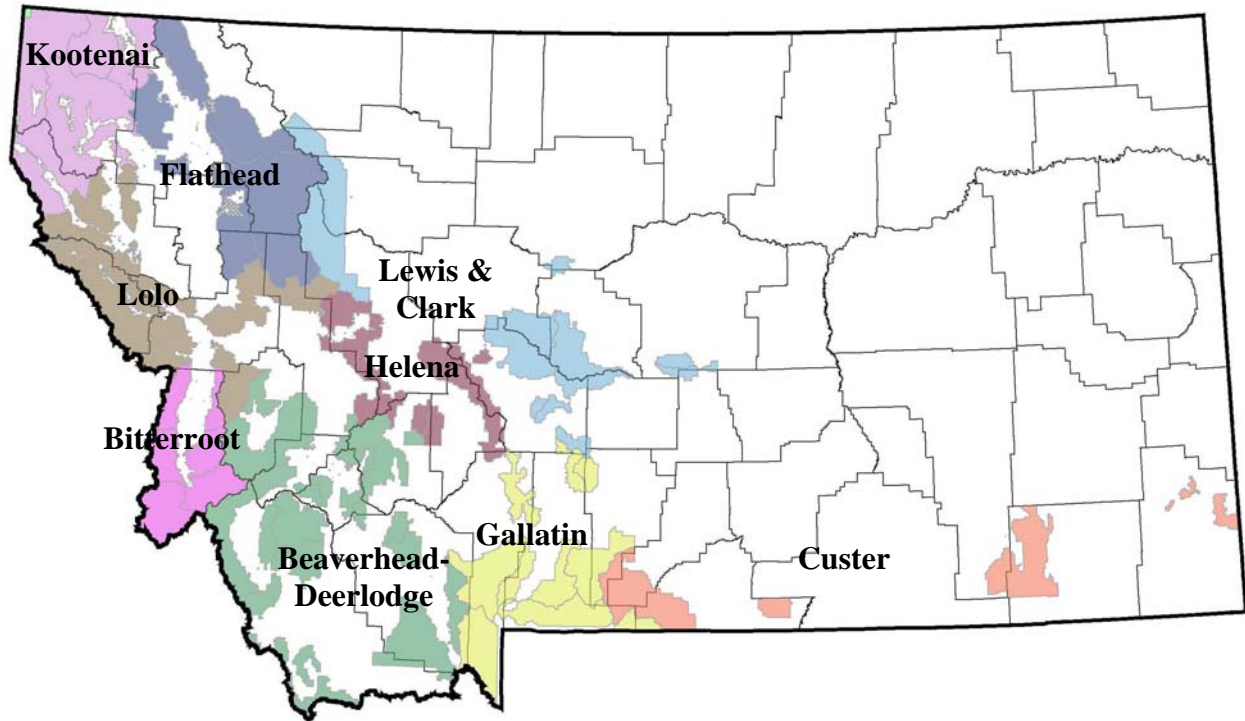
$P = \text{points (total from step 3)} + \text{trends (short term trend if known, otherwise use Long term trend)} + \text{intrinsic vulnerability}$

Explanation: Only include intrinsic vulnerability if you have no information on threats.

The following Heritage Ranks correspond to the final point total.

Points (P)	SRANK
$P \leq 1.5$	S1
$1.5 < P \leq 2.5$	S2
$2.5 < P \leq 3.5$	S3
$3.5 < P \leq 4.5$	S4
$P > 4.5$	S5

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles on National Forests in Montana



U.S. Forest Service and Montana Natural Heritage Program status ranks and notations on species presence are listed in the table below for each of the National Forests in Montana. Until recently, U.S. Forest Service Manual (2670.22) defined Sensitive species on U.S. Forest Service lands as those for which population viability is a concern as evidenced by a significant downward trend in population or a significant downward trend in habitat capacity. Sensitive species receive special considerations in various planning and project level decisions. The Regional Forester for the Northern Region designates Sensitive species on National Forests in Montana. These designations were last updated in 2007 and they apply only on USFS-administered lands. However, the U.S. Forest Service is implementing new planning regulations which will lead to changes in the identification of “special status” species on National Forest lands. For the time being, species will continue to be recognized as Sensitive for Region 1 under existing agency policy, but in addition many of the newly revised Forest Plans may also identify USFS Species of Concern and USFS Species of Interest as outlined below (FSH 1909.12, 43.22b). The new USFS Species of Concern will be species for which management actions may be necessary to prevent listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) based on proposed or candidate status under the ESA, recent delisting of species from the federal Endangered Species List, or NatureServe/Heritage Ranks of G1-G3 or T1-T3. The new USFS Species of Interest will be species for which management actions may be necessary or desirable to achieve ecological or other multiple-use objectives based on criteria as diverse as NatureServe ranks of S1-S2, species identified as of conservation concern in State Comprehensive Wildlife Strategies, species that are hunted, fished, or are otherwise of public interest, or other species for which there is evidence for significant threats to populations or habitat, declining trends in populations or habitat, rarity, or restricted ranges.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians on National Forests in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Common and Scientific Name	R1 USFS Status	Heritage Ranks	Beaverhead-Deerlodge	Bitterroot	Custer	Flathead	Gallatin	Helena	Kootenai	Lewis & Clark	Lolo
Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Presence Possible	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range
^A Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon aterrimus</i>)	No Special Status	G3/S1S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part
Coeur d' Alene Salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>)	Sensitive Species	G4/S2	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part
Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S4	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
^A Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S3	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Great Basin Spadefoot (<i>Spea intermontana</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)	Sensitive Species	G4/S2	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
^A Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousei</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Part
Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range
American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA Exotic	Presence Possible	Continue to Spread	Limited Presence	Limited Presence	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Continue to Spread	Presence Possible	Continue to Spread
Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
^B Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S1S3	Present Part	Historic Presence	Present Part	Historic Presence	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Nearly Extirpated	Present Part	Historic Presence
Wood Frog (<i>Rana sylvatica</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined

Presence and Status Ranks for Reptiles on National Forests in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

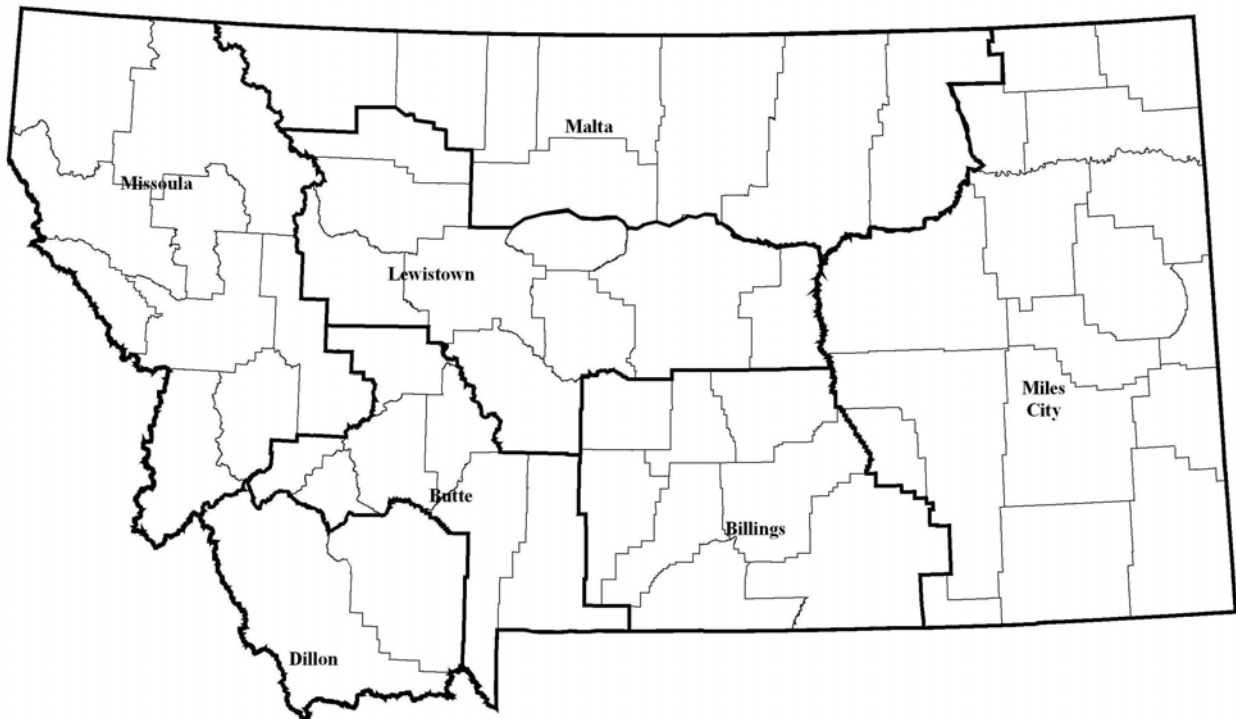
Common and Scientific Name	R1 USFS Status	Heritage Ranks	Beaverhead -Deerlodge	Bitterroot	Custer	Flathead	Gallatin	Helena	Kootenai	Lewis & Clark	Lolo
^A Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part
^A Spiny Softshell Turtle (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Part
^C Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S3	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Western Fence Lizard (<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible
^A Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Part
^A Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Presence Possible	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part
^A Western Hog-nosed Snake (<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
^A Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part
Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range
Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Presence Possible	Present Part	Present Part	Presence Possible	Present Part	Present Part

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

^C ³¹ single historic museum record and current presence is possible.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles on BLM Lands in Montana



Bureau of Land Management and Heritage Program status ranks and notations on species presence are listed in the table below for each of the BLM Field Offices in Montana. BLM Manual 6840 requires the State BLM Director, usually in cooperation with State agencies and Natural Heritage programs, to designate species as Sensitive if they: (1) are federally listed, proposed, or candidate species; (2) could become endangered in or extirpated from a State, or within a significant portion of their distribution; (3) are under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service; (4) are undergoing significant current or predicted downward trends in habitat capability that would reduce a species' existing distribution; (5) are undergoing significant current or predicted downward trends in population or density such that federal listed, proposed, candidate, or State listed status may become necessary; (6) typically have small and widely dispersed populations; (7) inhabit ecological refugia or other specialized or unique habitats; or (8) are State listed but which may be better conserved through application of BLM sensitive species status.

As specified in the 6840 policy, BLM Sensitive species are specially considered in budget planning, project planning, and analysis and land use planning and are given the same level of protection given to Federal candidate species in order to improve the condition of the species and their habitats so that special status recognition is no longer warranted. The Montana BLM Sensitive Species list was last updated in 2004.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians on BLM Lands in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Common and Scientific Name	BLM Status	Heritage Ranks	Billings	Butte	Dillon	Lewistown	Malta	Miles City	Missoula
Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire
Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part
^A Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon aterrimus</i>)	No Special Status	G3/S1S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Not present on BLM
Coeur d' Alene Salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>)	Sensitive Species	G4/S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part
Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S4	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire
^A Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S3	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range
Great Basin Spadefoot (<i>Spea intermontana</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)	Sensitive Species	G4/S2	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire
^A Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S2	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range
^C Canadian Toad (<i>Bufo hemiophrys</i>)	No Special Status	G4/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range
Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part
Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range
American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA Exotic	Continue to Spread	Limited Presence	Limited Presence	Limited Presence	No Records	Limited Presence	Continue to Spread
Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S4	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire
^B Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S1S3	Present Entire	Present Part	Apparently Extirpated	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Nearly Extirpated

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

33

^C questionable historic observation record, but presence is possible.

Presence and Status Ranks for Reptiles on BLM Lands in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

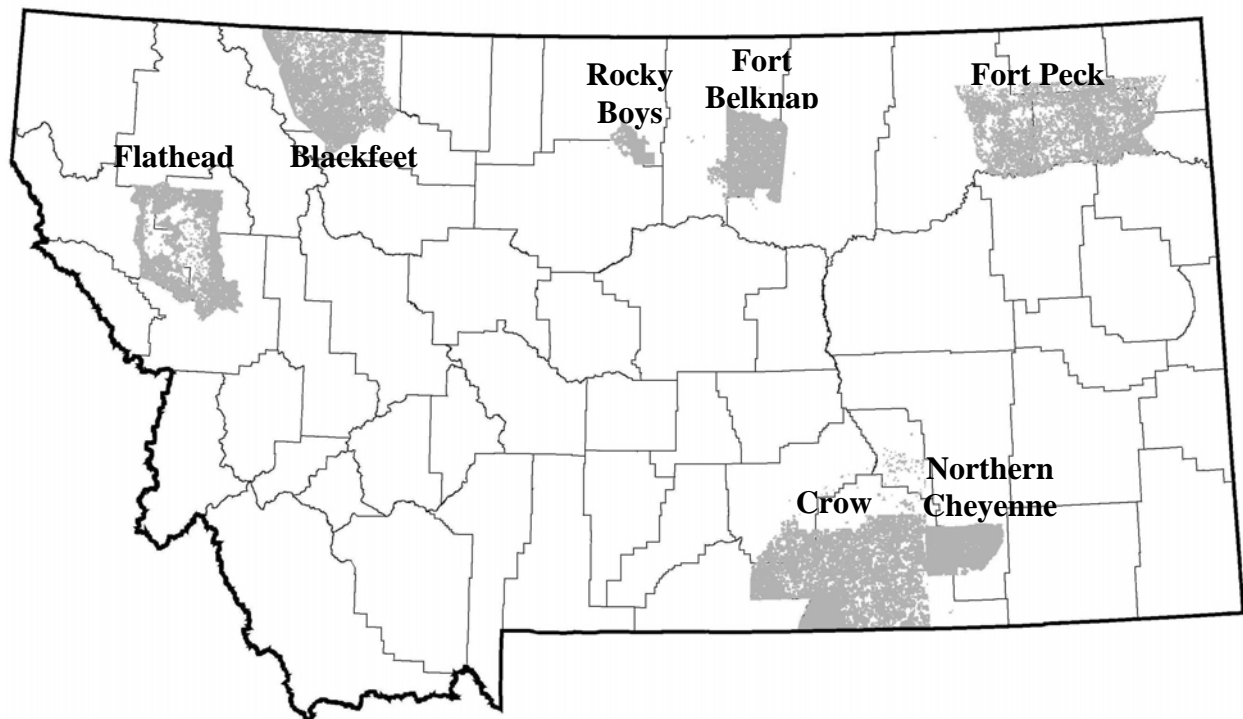
Common and Scientific Name	BLM Status	Heritage Ranks	Billings	Butte	Dillon	Lewistown	Malta	Miles City	Missoula
^A Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S3	Present Part	Limited Introduction	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Present Part	Limited Introduction
Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Spiny Softshell Turtle (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S3	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range
^A Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire
^C Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5/S3	Present Entire	Present Part	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range
Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Present Entire	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range
^A Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part
^A Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Presence Possible	Present Part	Present Entire
Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Western Hog-nosed Snake (<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5S2	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range
^A Smooth Greensnake (<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range
^A Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>)	Sensitive Species	G5S2	Present Part	Possible Presence	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range
Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire
Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range
Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire
Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

^C single historic museum record and current presence is possible.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles on Tribal Lands in Montana



Heritage Program status ranks and notations on species presence are listed in the table below for each of the Indian Reservations in Montana. Tribal fish and wildlife departments have responsibility for management of amphibians and reptiles on each reservation and as independent nations, each tribe independently decides the status designations of species on their lands. Species status designations on reservations in Montana were not identified for the current draft of this report.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians on Tribal Lands in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Common and Scientific Name	Tribal Status	Heritage Ranks	Blackfeet	Crow	Flathead	Fort Belknap	Fort Peck	Northern Cheyenne	Rocky Boy's
Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>)	?	G5/S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>)	?	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon aterrimus</i>)	?	G3/S1S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Coeur d' Alene Salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>)	?	G4/S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>)	?	G4/S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)	?	G5/S3	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^B Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)	?	G4/S2	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>)	?	G5/S2	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^C Canadian Toad (<i>Bufo hemiophrys</i>)	?	G4/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range
Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>)	?	G5/S4	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Present Entire	Presence Possible
Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>)	?	G5/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)	?	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)	?	G5/SNA Exotic	No Records	No Records	Continuing to Spread	No Records	No Records	No Records	No Records
Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)	?	G4/S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	?	G5/S1S3	Present Entire	Present Entire	Ongoing Reintroduction	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Wood Frog (<i>Rana sylvatica</i>)	?	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

^C questionable historic observation record, but presence is possible.

Presence and Status Ranks for Reptiles on Tribal Lands in Montana

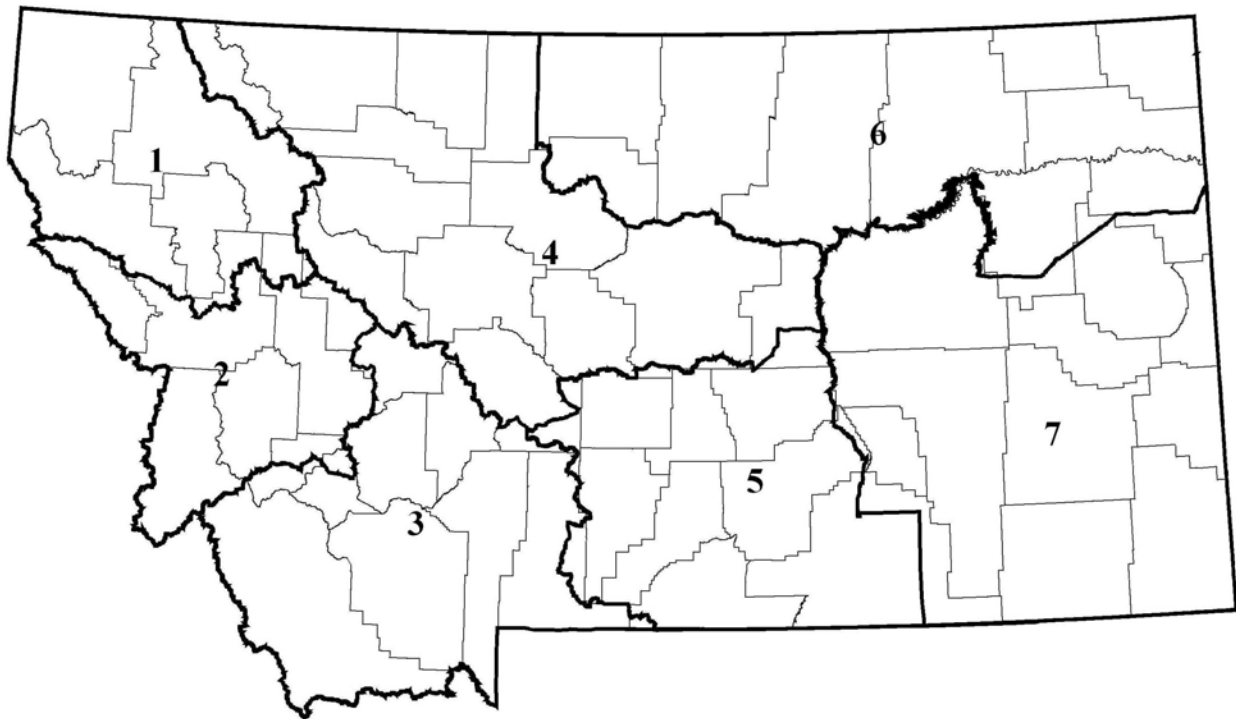
Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Common and Scientific Name	Tribal Status	Heritage Ranks	Blackfeet	Crow	Flathead	Fort Belknap	Fort Peck	Northern Cheyenne	Rocky Boy's
^A Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>)	?	G5/S3	Outside Range	Present Entire	Limited Introduction	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range
Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>)	?	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Spiny Softshell Turtle (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>)	?	G5/S3	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range
^A Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>)	?	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	?	G5/S3	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Possible Presence	Present Entire	Present Entire
Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>)	?	G5S3	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Presence Possible
Western Fence Lizard (<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>)	?	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Introduced in Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>)	?	G5S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>)	?	G5S4	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)	?	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Western Hog-nosed Snake (<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>)	?	G5S2	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Presence Possible
^A Smooth Greensnake (<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>)	?	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>)	?	G5S2	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Presence Possible
Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)	?	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>)	?	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire
Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>)	?	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)	?	G5S3	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Presence Possible
Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)	?	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles Within Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Wildlife Regions in Montana



Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' conservation and inventory tiering status, Heritage Program status ranks, and notations on species presence are listed in the table below for each of the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Regions in Montana. Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CFWCS) identifies fish and wildlife species that are in greatest need of conservation using a combination of criteria used in the joint Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and Montana Natural Heritage Program Species of Concern List (see above) as well as the input of a variety of biologists around the state. The significance of each conservation tier is defined as follows:

- Tier I: Greatest conservation need. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has a clear obligation to use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species, communities, and focus areas.
- Tier II: Moderate conservation need. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks could use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species, communities, and focus areas.
- Tier III: Lower conservation need. Although important to Montana's wildlife diversity, these species, communities, and focus areas are either abundant and widespread or are believed to have adequate conservation already in place.
- Tier IV: Species that are non-native, incidental, or on the periphery of their range and are either expanding or very common in adjacent states.

Montana's CFWCS also identifies 3 tiers of individual species and taxonomic groups that are in need of inventory work. Each species' conservation and inventory tiering status is indicated before and after a dash, respectively in the table below.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians Within Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Wildlife Regions in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Common and Scientific Name	CFWCS Tiers*	Heritage Ranks	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>)	2 – 3	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>)	2 – 3	G5/S4	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon aterrimus</i>)	4 – 3	G3/S1S3	Presence Possible	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Coeur d' Alene Salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>)	1 – 1	G4/S2	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>)	2 – 3	G4/S4	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)	2 – 1	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire
Great Basin Spadefoot (<i>Spea intermontana</i>)	3 – 2	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)	1 – 1	G4/S2	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>)	2 – 1	G5/S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire
^C Canadian Toad (<i>Bufo hemiophrys</i>)	4 – 3	G4/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Possible Presence	Outside Range
Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>)	2 – 3	G5/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire
Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>)	2 – 2	G5/S4	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)	3 – 3	G5/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)	4 – 3	G5/SNA Exotic	Continue to Spread	Continue to Spread	Limited Presence	Limited Presence	Continue to Spread	No Records	Limited Presence
Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)	2 – 3	G4/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	1 – 1	G5/S1S3	Nearly Extirpated	Extirpated	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Wood Frog (<i>Rana sylvatica</i>)	? – 3	G5/SNA	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

^C questionable historic observation record, but presence is possible.

Presence and Status Ranks for Reptiles Within Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Wildlife Regions in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

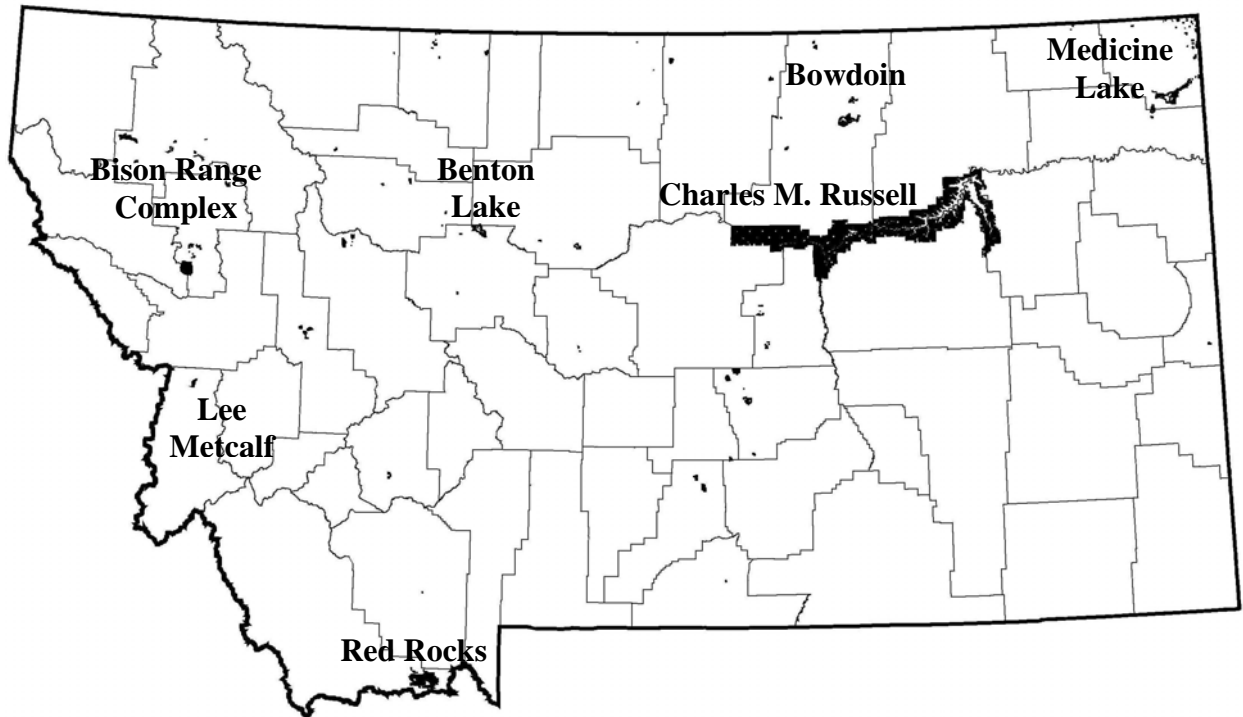
Common and Scientific Name	CFWCS Tiers*	Heritage Ranks	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
^A Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>)	1 - 1	G5/S3	Limited Introduction	Outside Range	Limited Introduction	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire
Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>)	3 - 3	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Spiny Softshell Turtle (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>)	1 - 1	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
^A Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>)	2 - 1	G5/S3	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^C Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma douglasii</i>)	No Tier Assigned	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^B Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	2 - 2	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Possibly Extirpated	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>)	2 - 2	G5S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
Western Fence Lizard (<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>)	No Tier Assigned	G5/SNA	Introduced in Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>)	2 - 1	G5S3	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>)	2 - 1	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range
Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)	3 - 2	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Western Hog-nosed Snake (<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>)	1 - 1	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Smooth Greensnake (<i>Ophedrys vernalis</i>)	1 - 1	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range
^A Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>)	1 - 1	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)	3 - 2	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>)	3 - 3	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Part
Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>)	3 - 2	G5S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire
Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)	2 - 3	G5S3	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Presence Possible	Present Entire
Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)	2 - 2	G5S4	Present Part	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

^C single historic museum record and current presence is possible.

**Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians and Reptiles
on USFWS Wildlife Refuges in Montana**



Heritage Program status ranks and notations on species presence are listed in the table below for each of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge or refuge complexes in Montana. While some amphibian and reptile species in Montana have undergone declines and/or regional extirpations in recent decades (e.g., Northern Leopard Frog, Western Toad, Greater Short-horned Lizard), none of these species is currently listed or is a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (16 U.S.C.A. §1531-1543 (Supp. 1996)). If an amphibian or reptile species in Montana were to be proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under the ESA the decision as to whether the species is threatened or endangered must be made solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data and must be judged according to the species status due to the five following factors (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range, (2) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes, (3) disease or predation, (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, and (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence (U.S.C. § 1533 (a) (1), (b)(1)). Clearly, it is in the best interest of the species, various state, federal, and tribal agencies, and the general public to take measures to avoid having these factors justify a listing under the ESA.

Presence and Status Ranks for Amphibians on USFWS Wildlife Refuges in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Common and Scientific Name	USFWS Status	Heritage Ranks	Benton Lake	Bowdoin	CMR	Lee Metcalf	Medicine Lake	Bison Range Complex	Red Rock Lakes
Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range
Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire
^A Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon aterrimus</i>)	No Special Status	G3/S1S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Coeur d' Alene Salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
^A Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible
Great Basin Spadefoot (<i>Spea intermontana</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible
^B Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire
^A Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S2	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range
^C Canadian Toad (<i>Bufo hemiophrys</i>)	No Special Status	G4/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range
Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range
Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range
Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire
American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA Exotic	No Records	No Records	No Records	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)	No Special Status	G4/S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire
^B Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S1S3	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Extirpated	Present Entire	Extirpated	Outside Range

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

^C single historic museum record in area and current presence is possible.

Presence and Status Ranks for Reptiles on USFWS Wildlife Refuges in Montana

Current distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's website at www.mtnhp.org

Common and Scientific Name	USFWS Status	Heritage Ranks	Benton Lake	Bowdoin	CMR	Lee Metcalf	Medicine Lake	Bison Range Complex	Red Rock Lakes
^A Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range	Introduction Possible	Outside Range
Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range
^A Spiny Softshell Turtle (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Part	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
^C Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	No Special Status	G5/SNA	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence Possible
^B Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>)	No Special Status	G5/S3	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range
Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Presence possible	Outside Range	Presence Possible	Outside Range
^A Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire
Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Present Entire
^A Western Hog-nosed Snake (<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>)	No Special Status	G5S2	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Smooth Greensnake (<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S2	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range
^A Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>)	No Special Status	G5S2	Presence Possible	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range	Outside Range
Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire
Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>)	No Special Status	G5S5	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Part	Present Entire	Outside Range	Present Entire	Present Entire
Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Outside Range	Present Entire	Outside Range	Outside Range
Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S3	Present Entire	Presence Possible	Present Part	Present Entire	Presence Possible	Present Entire	Present Entire
Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)	No Special Status	G5S4	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Entire	Present Part	Presence Possible

^A relatively few records for species.

^B evidence that species has declined.

^C single historic museum record and current presence is possible.

General Habitat Associations for Amphibians in Montana

	Habitat Type	Species Typically Present
Aquatic Habitats	Temporary ponds and wetlands in the mountainous region of the state	Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>) Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>) * Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>) Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)
	Temporary ponds and wetlands in the plains region of the state	Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>) Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>) Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>) Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>) Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>) Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)
	Permanent lakes and ponds in the mountainous region of the state	Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>) + Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>) Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>) * Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>) * # American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>) Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>) * @ Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)
	Permanent lakes and ponds in the plains region of the state	Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>) Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>) Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>) Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>) * # American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>) Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)
	Riverine and riparian habitats in the mountainous region of the state	Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon aterrimus</i>) Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>) Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>) * # American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>) Columbia Spotted Frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>) * @ Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)
	Riverine and riparian habitats in the plains region of the state	Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>) Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>) Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>) * # American Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>) Northern Leopard Frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)
	Fractured rock sites with subterranean water near streams, springs, and spray zones on the northwestern margin of the state	Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>) Coeur d'Alene Salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>) Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>)
Terrestrial Habitats	Closed forest habitats in the mountainous region of the state	Long-toed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>) Idaho Giant Salamander (<i>Dicamptodon aterrimus</i>) * Pacific Treefrog (<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>)
	Open forest, shrubland, and grassland habitats in the mountainous region of the state	+ Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>) Western Toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)
	Prairies, badlands, and open forest habitats in the plains region of the state	Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>) Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>) Great Plains Toad (<i>Bufo cognatus</i>) Woodhouse's Toad (<i>Bufo woodhousii</i>) Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)

* Typically restricted to lower elevations

+ Only found in the Tobacco Valley near Eureka

Exotic invasive species introduced and spreading in some areas

@ Typical historical habitat prior to declines

General Habitat Associations for Reptiles in Montana

	Habitat Type	Species Typically Present
Aquatic Habitats	Temporary ponds and wetlands in the mountainous region of the state	Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>) Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)
	Temporary ponds and wetlands in the plains region of the state	* Smooth Greensnake (<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>) Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>) Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>) Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)
	Permanent lakes and ponds in the mountainous region of the state	Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>) Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>) Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)
	Permanent lakes and ponds in the plains region of the state	Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>) Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>) * Smooth Greensnake (<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>) Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>) Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>) Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)
	Riverine and riparian habitats in the mountainous region of the state	Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>) Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>) Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>) Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>)
	Riverine and riparian habitats in the plains region of the state	Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>) Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemys picta</i>) Spiny Softshell (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>) Western Hog-nosed Snake (<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>) * Smooth Greensnake (<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>) Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>) Terrestrial Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>) Plains Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis radix</i>) Common Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>) Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)
Terrestrial Habitats	Closed forest habitats in the mountainous portion of the state	Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>) Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>)
	Open forest, shrubland, and grassland habitats in the mountainous region of the state	Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>) + Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>) Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>) # Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>) Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>) Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>) Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>) Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)
	Prairies, badlands, shrublands, and open forest habitats in the plains region of the state	Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>) Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>) Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>) Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>) Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>) Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)
	Rock outcrops in the mountainous region of the state	Northern Alligator Lizard (<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>) Western Skink (<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>) Rubber Boa (<i>Charina bottae</i>) Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>) Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)
	Rock outcrops in the plains region of the state	Greater Short-horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>) Common Sagebrush Lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>) Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>) Milksnake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>) Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>) Prairie Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus viridis</i>)

* Only in the far northeastern corner of the state

+ Historical habitat in portions of southwest Montana prior to apparent declines or extirpations

Only found around the margins of Yellowstone National Park

LAWS AND REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN MONTANA

Federal Laws and Regulations, Tribal regulations, and Montana state laws and regulations, all govern the management of amphibians and reptiles in Montana.

Federal Laws and Regulations

Federal laws applicable to amphibians and reptiles include those governing the management of agencies responsible for the management of federal lands and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C.A. §1531-1543 (Supp. 1996)). Federal regulations for agencies managing federal lands that are applicable to amphibians and reptiles are mostly associated with special status designations as described in the Presence and Status sections above. While some amphibian and reptile species in Montana have undergone declines and/or regional extirpations in recent decades (e.g., Northern Leopard Frog, Western Toad, Greater Short-horned Lizard), none of these species is currently listed or is a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (16 U.S.C.A. §1531-1543 (Supp. 1996)). If an amphibian or reptile species in Montana were to be proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under the ESA the decision as to whether the species is threatened or endangered must be made solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data and must be judged according to the species status due to the five following factors (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range, (2) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes, (3) disease or predation, (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, and (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence (U.S.C. § 1533 (a) (1), (b)(1)). If a species was listed, a recovery plan for the species must be developed unless a plan would not promote the conservation of the species (U.S.C. § 1533 (f)). The development of recovery programs for listed species is undertaken according to the threats faced by the species and the degree to which it conflicts with economic activity (48 FR 43104). Each recovery plan must include, “to the maximum extent practicable” (1) a description of site specific management actions, (2) objective, measurable criteria which, if met, would allow the agency to find the species has recovered and therefore may be removed from the list, and (3) estimates of the time and costs required to carry out the measures detailed in the recovery plan (48 FR 16756).

Tribal Regulations

Tribal fish and wildlife departments have responsibility for management of amphibians and reptiles on each reservation and as independent nations, each tribe independently decides the status designations of species on their lands. Species status designations on reservations in Montana were not identified for the current draft of this report.

Portions of Montana Code Annotated Relevant to Nongame and Endangered Species

87-5-101. Short title.

This part shall be known and may be cited as "The Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act".

87-5-102. (Effective October 1, 2007). Definitions.

As used in this part, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Account" means the nongame wildlife account established in [87-5-121](#).
- (2) "Commercial purposes" means the collection, harvest, possession, or transportation of a species or subspecies of nongame wildlife from the wild with the intent to barter, offer for sale, ship or transport for eventual sale, or sell the animal or any part of the animal.
- (3) "Ecosystem" means a system of living organisms and their environment, each influencing the existence of the other and both necessary for the maintenance of life.
- (4) "Endangered species" means a species or subspecies of wildlife that is actively threatened with extinction due to any of the following factors:
 - (a) the destruction, drastic modification, or severe curtailment of its habitat;
 - (b) its overutilization for scientific, commercial, or sporting purposes;
 - (c) the effect on it of disease, pollution, or predation;
 - (d) other natural or artificial factors affecting its prospects of survival or recruitment within the state; or
 - (e) any combination of the foregoing factors.
- (5) "Management" means the collection and application of biological information for the purposes of increasing the number of individuals within species and populations of wildlife up to the optimum carrying capacity of their habitat and maintaining those levels. The term includes the entire range of activities that constitute a modern scientific resource program, including but not limited to research, census, law enforcement, habitat improvement, and education. The term also includes the periodic or total protection of species or populations as well as regulated taking.
- (6) "Nongame wildlife" means a wild mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile, fish, mollusk, crustacean, or other wild animal not otherwise legally classified by statute or regulation of this state. Animals designated by statute or regulation of this state as predatory in nature are not classified as nongame wildlife for purposes of this part.
- (7) "Optimum carrying capacity" means that point at which a given habitat can support healthy populations of wildlife species, having regard to the total ecosystem, without diminishing the ability of the habitat to continue that function.
- (8) "Person" means an individual, firm, corporation, association, or partnership.
- (9) "Take" means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill wildlife.
- (10) "Wildlife" means a wild mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, mollusk, crustacean, or other wild animal or any part, product, egg, or offspring or the dead body or parts of the animal.

87-5-103. Legislative intent, findings, and policy.

(1) The legislature, mindful of its constitutional obligations under Article II, section 3, and Article IX of the Montana constitution, has enacted The Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act. It is the legislature's intent that the requirements of this part provide adequate remedies for the protection of the environmental life support system from degradation and provide adequate remedies to prevent unreasonable depletion and degradation of natural

resources.

(2) The legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) that it is the policy of this state to manage certain nongame wildlife for human enjoyment, for scientific purposes, and to ensure their perpetuation as members of ecosystems;

(b) that species or subspecies of wildlife indigenous to this state that may be found to be endangered within the state should be protected in order to maintain and, to the extent possible, enhance their numbers;

(c) that the state should assist in the protection of species or subspecies of wildlife that are considered to be endangered elsewhere by prohibiting the taking, possession, transportation, exportation, processing, sale or offer for sale, or shipment within this state of species or subspecies of wildlife unless those actions will assist in preserving or propagating the species or subspecies.

87-5-104. Investigations by department.

The department shall conduct investigations on nongame wildlife in order to develop information relating to population, distribution, habitat needs, limiting factors, and other biological and ecological data to determine management measures necessary for their continued ability to sustain themselves successfully. The department shall conduct ongoing investigations of nongame wildlife.

87-5-105. Regulations to manage nongame wildlife.

(1) On the basis of the determinations made pursuant to [87-5-104](#), the department shall issue management regulations. The regulations must set forth species or subspecies of nongame wildlife that the department considers to be in need of management pursuant to [87-5-104](#) through [87-5-106](#), giving their common and scientific names by species and subspecies.

(2) The department shall by regulation establish limitations relating to taking, possession, transportation, exportation, processing, sale or offer for sale, or shipment considered necessary to manage nongame wildlife that is designated in need of management.

87-5-106. Unlawful acts.

Except as provided in regulations issued by the department, it shall be unlawful for any person to take, possess, transport, export, sell, or offer for sale nongame wildlife deemed by the department to be in need of management. Subject to the same exception, it shall further be unlawful for any common or contract carrier knowingly to transport or receive for shipment nongame wildlife deemed by the department to be in need of management.

87-5-107. List of endangered species.

(1) (a) On the basis of investigations on nongame wildlife provided for in [87-5-104](#) and other available scientific and commercial data and after consultation with other state wildlife agencies, appropriate federal agencies, and other interested persons and organizations, the department shall recommend to the legislature a list of those species and subspecies of wildlife indigenous to the state that are determined to be endangered within this state, giving their common and scientific names by species and subspecies.

(b) The department may propose legislation to specifically include any species or subspecies of fish and wildlife appearing on the United States' list of endangered native fish and wildlife (part 17 of Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, appendix D) as it appears on July 1, 1973, as well as any species or subspecies of fish and wildlife appearing on the United States' list

of endangered foreign fish and wildlife (part 17 of Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, appendix A), as that list may be modified.

(2) (a) The department shall conduct a review of the state list of endangered species every 2 years. The department may propose specific legislation to amend the list by additions that are considered appropriate and at times that are considered appropriate.

(b) Whenever a species or subspecies is removed from the United States' list of endangered native fish and wildlife (part 17 of Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, appendix D) and that species or subspecies is also on the state list of endangered species in ARM 12.5.201, the department shall amend the state list to remove that species or subspecies. The removal of a species or subspecies from the state list pursuant to this subsection (2)(b) does not require approval by the legislature.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in this part, it is unlawful for any person to take, possess, transport, export, sell, or offer for sale and for any common or contract carrier knowingly to transport or receive for shipment any species or subspecies of wildlife appearing on any of the following lists:

(a) the list of wildlife indigenous to the state determined to be endangered within the state pursuant to subsection (1);

(b) any species or subspecies of fish and wildlife included by the department and appearing on the United States' list of endangered native fish and wildlife (part 17 of Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, appendix D) as it appears on July 1, 1973; and the United States' list of endangered foreign fish and wildlife (part 17 of Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, appendix A), as that list may be modified.

(4) Any species or subspecies of fish and wildlife appearing on any of the enumerated lists that is brought into the state from another state or from a point outside the territorial limits of the United States and that is transported across the state destined for a point beyond the state may be brought into the state and transported without restriction in accordance with the terms of any federal permit or permit issued under the laws or regulations of another state.

(5) If the United States' list of endangered native fish and wildlife is modified by additions, the modifications, whether or not involving species or subspecies indigenous to the state, may be accepted as binding under subsections (3) and (4) if, after the type of scientific determination described in subsection (1), the department proposes and the legislature accepts the modification for the state.

87-5-108. Establishment of programs.

(1) The director shall establish such programs, including acquisition of land or aquatic habitat, as are deemed necessary for management of nongame and endangered wildlife. The department shall establish such policies as are necessary to carry out the purpose of this section and [87-5-109](#).

(2) In carrying out programs authorized by this section, the department may enter into agreements with federal agencies, political subdivisions of the state, or with private persons for administration and management of any area established under this section and [87-5-109](#) or utilized for management of nongame or endangered wildlife.

(3) The governor shall review other programs administered by him and, to the extent practicable, utilize such programs in furtherance of the purposes of this section and [87-5-109](#). The governor shall also encourage other state and federal agencies to utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this section and [87-5-109](#).

87-5-109. Taking of species for educational, scientific, or other purposes.

(1) The director may permit the taking, possession, transportation, exportation, or shipment of species or subspecies of wildlife which appear on the state list of endangered species, on the United States' list of endangered native fish and wildlife, as amended and accepted in accordance with [87-5-107](#)(5), or on the United States' list of endangered foreign fish and wildlife, as such list may be modified hereafter, for scientific, zoological, or educational purposes, for propagation in captivity of such wildlife, or for other special purposes.

(2) Upon good cause shown and where necessary to alleviate damage to property or to protect human health, endangered species may be removed, captured, or destroyed but only pursuant to permit issued by the director and, where possible, by or under the supervision of an agent of the department. Endangered species may be removed, captured, or destroyed without permit by any person in emergency situations involving an immediate threat to human life. Provisions for removal, capture, or destruction of nongame wildlife for the purposes set forth above shall be set forth in regulations issued by the department pursuant to [87-5-105](#).

87-5-110. Department to issue regulations.

The department shall issue such regulations as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this part.

87-5-111. Enforcement and penalty.

(1) Any person who violates the provisions of this part or whoever fails to procure or violates the terms of any permit issued thereunder shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(2) Upon a first conviction for a violation under this part, the court may fine the defendant not to exceed \$250. Upon a second such conviction, the defendant may be fined not to exceed \$500 or be imprisoned in the county jail for any term not to exceed 30 days, or both. Upon subsequent such convictions, the defendant shall be fined not less than \$500 or more than \$1,000 and in addition may be imprisoned in the county jail for any term not to exceed 6 months.

(3) Any officer employed and authorized by the director or any peace officer of the state or of any municipality or county within the state shall have authority to enforce the provisions of this part.

(4) Wildlife seized under the provisions of this part shall be held by an officer or agent of the department pending disposition of court proceedings and thereafter be forfeited to the state for disposition as the director may deem appropriate. Prior to forfeiture, the director may direct the transfer of wildlife so seized to a qualified zoological, educational, or scientific institution for safekeeping. The department is authorized to issue regulations to implement this subsection.

87-5-112. Construction.

This part may not be construed to apply retroactively or to prohibit importation into the state of wildlife that are lawfully imported into the United States or lawfully taken or removed from another state or to prohibit entry into the state or possession, transportation, exportation, processing, sale or offer for sale, or shipment of any wildlife whose species or subspecies is determined to be threatened with statewide extinction in this state but not in the state where originally taken, if the person engaging therein demonstrates by substantial evidence that the wildlife was lawfully taken or removed from the state. However, this section may not be construed to permit the possession, transportation, exportation, processing, sale or offer for sale, or shipment within this state of wildlife on the United States' list of endangered native fish and

wildlife, as amended and accepted in accordance with [87-5-107](#)(5), except as permitted in the provision by [87-5-107](#)(3) and (4) and [87-5-109](#)(1).

87-5-116. Limited taking of certain nongame wildlife for commercial purposes -- exceptions.

(1) The following nongame wildlife may not be taken for commercial purposes, except as provided in subsections (3) and (4), without prior authorization of the department, subject to regulations adopted by the department:

- (a) northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*);
- (b) pika (*Ochotona princeps*);
- (c) pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*);
- (d) amphibians native to the state of Montana; and
- (e) reptiles native to the state of Montana.

(2) The department may regulate the taking of nongame wildlife for commercial purposes. Regulations may establish limitations related to the taking, possession, transportation, exportation, processing, sale or offer for sale, and shipment of nongame wildlife that are considered necessary to manage nongame wildlife.

(3) The harvest of the prairie rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*) for commercial purposes may not be regulated under this section.

(4) This section does not prohibit:

- (a) outfitting for the shooting of nongame wildlife;
- (b) payment by a landowner to an individual for shooting or removing nongame wildlife; or
- (c) the use of byproducts of nongame wildlife in fishing flies, jewelry, or other handicrafts.

87-5-121. Nongame wildlife account.

(1) There is a nongame wildlife account in the state special revenue fund provided for in [17-2-102](#).

(2) All money collected under [15-30-150](#) and all interest earned by the fund before being expended under this section must be deposited in the account.

(3) Money in the account must be used by the department, upon the approval of the commission as determined under [87-5-122](#), to provide adequate funding for:

(a) research and education programs on nongame wildlife in Montana, as provided for in [87-5-104](#); and

(b) any management programs for nongame wildlife approved by the legislature under [87-5-105](#) as species or subspecies in need of management.

(4) The money is available to the department in the same manner as provided in [87-1-601](#), except that money collected under [15-30-150](#) may not be used:

- (a) for the purchase of any real property; or
- (b) in such a way as to interfere with the production on or management of private property.

87-5-122. Duties of commission. (1) The commission shall review and approve annually the nongame wildlife programs projects recommended by the department for funding from the nongame wildlife account. The commission shall provide for public comment during the review and approval process.

(2) The commission may adopt rules governing:

- (a) the use of the nongame wildlife account set forth in [87-5-121](#); and
- (b) the review and approval process set forth in subsection (1).

Portions of Montana Code Annotated Relevant to Importation, Introduction, and Translocation of Wildlife

87-5-701. Purpose

The legislature finds that in order to protect Montana's native wildlife and plant species, livestock, horticultural, forestry, and agricultural production, and human health and safety, it is necessary to regulate the importation for introduction and the transplantation or introduction of wildlife in the state and to regulate the importation, transplantation, possession, and sale of exotic wildlife. Serious threats, known and unknown, from the introduction of wildlife and exotic wildlife into Montana necessitate the regulation of the importation for introduction and the transplantation or introduction of wildlife and regulation of the importation, transplantation, possession, and sale of exotic wildlife unless it can be shown that no harm will result from the importation, transplantation, possession, sale, or introduction. Any importation, transplantation, possession, sale, or introduction permitted must be conducted in a manner to ensure that wildlife or exotic wildlife can be controlled if harm arises from unforeseen effects.

87-5-702. Definitions.

For purposes of this part, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Controlled exotic wildlife" means species placed on the controlled exotic wildlife list under [87-5-707](#) that may be imported, possessed, or sold only pursuant to commission and department rules and an authorization permit provided for in [87-5-705](#)(2).

(2) "Domestic animal" means an animal that, through long association with humans, has been bred to a degree that has resulted in genetic changes affecting color, temperament, conformation, or other attributes of the species to an extent that makes the animal unique and distinguishable from wild individuals of the species and that is readily controllable if accidentally released into the wild. The term includes livestock, as defined in [81-2-702](#), dogs, cats, rodents, Eurasian ferrets, and poultry.

(3) "Exotic wildlife" means a wildlife species that is not native to Montana.

(4) "Feral" means the appearance of an animal and any offspring that have escaped captivity and become wild.

(5) "Importation" means the act of receiving, bringing or having brought, or shipping into the state for a person's temporary or permanent residence or domicile any wildlife from a location outside the state.

(6) "Introduction" means the release from captivity or attempt to release from captivity, intentional or otherwise, wildlife from outside the state into the wild within the state.

(7) "Native wildlife" means a species or subspecies of wildlife that historically occurred in Montana and that has not been introduced by humans or has not migrated into Montana as a result of human activity.

(8) "Noncontrolled exotic wildlife" means animal species traditionally sold or kept as pets and includes animals listed in [87-5-706](#) or animals that are added to the list in [87-5-706](#) by commission rule.

(9) "Possession" means to own or have control over an animal for personal use or resale.

(10) "Prohibited exotic wildlife" means animal species placed on the list provided in [87-5-704](#)(3)(a) that may not be imported, possessed, or sold.

(11) "Transplantation" means the release of or attempt to release, intentional or otherwise, wildlife from one place within the state into another part of the state.

- (12) (a) "Wildlife" means any wild mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, mollusk, crustacean, or other wild animal or the egg, sperm, embryo, or offspring of the wild animal.
- (b) The term does not include domestic animals.

87-5-704. Rulemaking

(1) The commission may adopt rules to implement [87-5-701](#), [87-5-702](#), and [87-5-711](#) through [87-5-715](#). In implementing [87-5-713](#), the commission may adopt rules approving species of wildlife that may be introduced by the department. In implementing [87-5-715](#), the commission may adopt rules to authorize the control or extermination by the department of introduced wildlife species.

(2) The department may adopt rules to implement [87-5-713](#) and [87-5-715](#). In implementing [87-5-713](#) and [87-5-715](#), the department may not adopt rules in the subject areas reserved to the commission in subsection (1).

(3) (a) The commission may adopt rules to implement [87-5-705](#) through [87-5-709](#) and [87-5-712](#) regarding the importation, possession, and sale of exotic wildlife, including adoption of a list of controlled exotic wildlife and a list of prohibited exotic wildlife. The commission may by rule add to the list of noncontrolled exotic wildlife provided in [87-5-706](#). The department of livestock may not issue import permits for exotic wildlife on a list of controlled exotic wildlife or prohibited exotic wildlife without authorization from the department.

(b) The commission may adopt rules regarding the operation of the classification review committee established in [87-5-708](#).

(4) (a) The department may adopt rules regarding issuance of the authorization permit provided for in [87-5-705](#)(2), including the establishment of a reasonable fee for the permit.

(b) The department may adopt rules regarding the amnesty program provided for in [87-5-709](#)(2).

87-5-705. Regulation of exotic wildlife

(1) A person may not import into the state, possess, or sell any exotic wildlife unless:

(a) the importation, possession, or sale of the exotic wildlife is allowed by law or commission rule; and

(b) the person has obtained authorization for importation from the department of livestock pursuant to Title 81, chapter 2, part 7.

(2) The department may issue a permit for authorizing the possession or sale of controlled exotic wildlife and make the permit available to persons who wish to import, possess, or sell controlled exotic wildlife, subject to rules of the commission and the department. The department may charge a reasonable fee, as determined by department rule, for the issuance of the authorization permit.

87-5-706. Noncontrolled exotic wildlife authorized for possession or sale

(1) The following noncontrolled exotic wildlife may not be released or transplanted in the state but may be possessed or sold as pets in Montana without a permit:

(a) tropical and subtropical birds in the order Passeriformes, including but not limited to birds in the families:

- (i) Sturnidae (mynahs);
- (ii) Ramphastidae (toucans, toucanettes);
- (iii) Fringillidae (siskins);

- (iv) Estrildidae (finches);
- (v) Emberizidae (cardinals);
- (vi) Ploceidae (weavers);
- (vii) Timaliidae (mesias);
- (viii) Viduinae (wydahs);
- (ix) Thraupidae (tanagers);
- (x) Zosteropidae (zosterops);
- (xi) Psittacidae (parrots);
- (xii) Loriidae (lories); and
- (xiii) Cacatuidae (cockatoos);
- (b) nonnative species in the subfamily Phasianinae, except:
 - (i) chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*);
 - (ii) gray (Hungarian) partridge (*Perdix perdix*);
 - (iii) ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*); and
 - (iv) turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*);
- (c) all tropical fish, subtropical fish, marine fish, common goldfish (*Carassius auratus*), and koi (*Cyprinus carpio*) for use in residential and office aquariums;
- (d) unless otherwise regulated pursuant to [87-5-116](#), all nonnative tropical and subtropical species of nonvenomous snakes not on the controlled or prohibited lists in the families:
 - (i) Boidae (boas);
 - (ii) Bolyeriidae (Round Island Boas);
 - (iii) Tropidophiidae (dwarf boas);
 - (iv) Pythonidae (pythons);
 - (v) Colubridae (modern snakes);
 - (vi) Acrochordidae (file and elephant trunk snakes);
 - (vii) Xenopeltidae (sunbeam snakes);
 - (viii) Aniliidae (pipe snakes);
 - (ix) Uropeltidae (shield-tailed snakes);
 - (x) Anomalepididae (blind snakes);
 - (xi) Leptotyphlopidae (blind snakes); and
 - (xii) Typhlopidae (blind snakes);
- (e) unless otherwise regulated pursuant to [87-5-116](#), all nonnative tropical and subtropical species of nonvenomous lizards not on the controlled or prohibited lists, including but not limited to the following families or subfamilies:
 - (i) Agamidae (chisel-teeth lizards);
 - (ii) Amphisbaenidae (worm lizards);
 - (iii) Anelytropsidae (limbless lizards);
 - (iv) Anguinae (glass and alligator lizards);
 - (v) Anniellidae (legless lizards);
 - (vi) Chamaeleonidae (chameleons);
 - (vii) Cordylidae (girdle-tailed lizards);
 - (viii) Corytophanidae (casquehead lizards);
 - (ix) Crotaphytidae (collared and leopard lizards);
 - (x) Dibamidae (blind lizards);
 - (xi) Eublepharidae (eyelid geckos);
 - (xii) Feyliniidae (African snake skinks);

- (xiii) Gekkonidae (geckos);
 - (xiv) Helodermatidae (beaded lizards and gila monsters);
 - (xv) Iguanidae (iguanas);
 - (xvi) Lacertidae (wall lizards);
 - (xvii) Lanthanotidae (earless monitor);
 - (xviii) Phrynosomatidae (earless, spiny, and horned lizards);
 - (xix) Polychrotidae (anoles);
 - (xx) Pygopodidae (snake lizards);
 - (xxi) Scincidae (skinks);
 - (xxii) Teiidae (whiptail);
 - (xxiii) Tropicuridae (neotropical ground lizards);
 - (xxiv) Varanidae (monitor lizard);
 - (xxv) Xantusiidae (night lizards); and
 - (xxvi) Xenosauridae (knob-scaled lizards);
- (f) unless otherwise regulated pursuant to [87-5-116](#), all nonnative tropical and subtropical species of turtles with a carapace or shell length of more than 4 inches and not on the controlled or prohibited lists in the families:
- (i) Carettochelyidae (New Guinea softshell turtles);
 - (ii) Chelidae (snake-necked turtles);
 - (iii) Chelydridae (snapping turtles);
 - (iv) Dermatemydidae (Central American river turtle);
 - (v) Emydidae (pond turtles);
 - (vi) Kinosternidae (mud turtles and musk turtles);
 - (vii) Pelomedusidae (hidden-necked turtles);
 - (viii) Platysternidae (big-headed turtle);
 - (ix) Testudinidae (tortoises); and
 - (x) Trionychidae (soft-shelled turtles);
- (g) unless otherwise regulated pursuant to [87-5-116](#), all nonnative tropical and subtropical species of frogs and toads not on the controlled or prohibited lists in the families:
- (i) Atelopodidae (harlequin frogs);
 - (ii) Bufonidae (true toads);
 - (iii) Centrolenidae (glass frogs);
 - (iv) Dendrobatidae (poison dart frogs);
 - (v) Hylidae (tree frogs);
 - (vi) Leptodactylidae (rain frogs);
 - (vii) Microhylidae (narrow-mouthed toads);
 - (viii) Pelobatidae (spadefoot toads);
 - (ix) Pelodytidae (old world spadefoot toads);
 - (x) Ranidae (true frogs, except bullfrogs, *Rana catesbeiana*);
 - (xi) Rhacophoridae (old world tree frogs); and
 - (xii) Rhinophrynidae (Mexican burrowing frog);
- (h) unless otherwise regulated pursuant to [87-5-116](#), all nonnative tropical and subtropical species of limbless amphibians not on the controlled or prohibited lists in the families:
- (i) Caeciliidae (caecilians);
 - (ii) Ichthyophiidae (fish caecilians);
 - (iii) Rhinatrematidae (beaked caecilians);

- (iv) Scolecomorphidae (tropical caecilians); and
- (v) Uraeotyphlidae (Indian caecilians); and
- (i) unless otherwise regulated pursuant to [87-5-116](#), all nonnative tropical and subtropical species of salamanders not on the controlled or prohibited lists in the families:

- (i) Ambystomatidae (mole salamanders);
- (ii) Amphiumidae (amphiumas);
- (iii) Cryptobranchidae (hellbenders);
- (iv) Dicamptodontidae (giant salamanders);
- (v) Hynobiidae (Asian salamanders);
- (vi) Plethodontidae (woodland salamanders);
- (vii) Proteidae (waterdogs);
- (viii) Salamandridae (newts, except for rough-skinned newt, *Taricha granulosa*); and
- (ix) Sirenidae (sirens).

(2) The commission may by rule authorize the possession or sale of other species of noncontrolled exotic wildlife that are not listed in subsection (1) if it is determined that the other species present minimal disease, ecological, environmental, safety, or health risks.

87-5-708. Classification review committee -- composition, appointment, and duties.

(1) The director shall appoint a classification review committee whose duty is to advise the commission regarding the importation, possession, and sale of exotic wildlife, including recommendations on animals to be placed on the noncontrolled, controlled, or prohibited exotic wildlife list.

(2) The classification review committee is composed of at least one representative from:

- (a) the department;
- (b) the department of public health and human services;
- (c) the department of livestock;
- (d) the department of agriculture;
- (e) a business that breeds or exhibits exotic wildlife; and
- (f) the general public who has an interest in fish or wildlife.

(3) Members of the classification review committee are not entitled to compensation or travel expenses as provided in [2-15-122](#).

87-5-709. Exceptions and exemptions to possession and sale of exotic wildlife.

(1) Sections [87-5-705](#) through [87-5-708](#) and this section do not apply to:

(a) institutions that have established that their proposed facilities are adequate to provide secure confinement of wildlife, including:

- (i) an accredited zoological garden chartered by the state as a nonprofit corporation;
- (ii) a roadside menagerie permitted under [87-4-803](#) that was established for the purpose of exhibition or attracting trade;
- (iii) a research facility for testing and science that employs individuals licensed under [37-34-301](#) or that submits evidence to the department that it meets animal testing standards as provided by the national institutes of health, the national science foundation, the centers for disease control and prevention, the United States department of agriculture, or another similar nationally recognized and approved testing standard; or

(b) domestic animals.

(2) Authorization for possession must be provided by the department for exotic wildlife

possessed as of January 1, 2004, and the authorization may include any conditions and restrictions necessary to minimize risks.

87-5-711. Control of importation for introduction and transplantation or introduction of wildlife.

(1) Except as otherwise provided, the importation for introduction or the transplantation or introduction of any wildlife is prohibited unless the commission determines, based upon scientific investigation and after public hearing, that a species of wildlife poses no threat of harm to native wildlife and plants or to agricultural production and that the transplantation or introduction of a species has significant public benefits.

(2) With regard to the transplantation or introduction of a fish species not previously legally transplanted to a specific water body within the state or not previously legally introduced to the state, the requirement for scientific investigation in subsection (1) may be satisfied only by completion of an environmental review conforming to the provisions of Title 75, chapter 1, part 2.

87-5-712. Authority for commission to control importation, possession, or sale of certain wildlife species and exotic wildlife.

(1) The commission may, after public hearing and recommendation by the classification review committee in [87-5-708](#), list by administrative rule wildlife species or exotic wildlife that may not be imported, possessed, or sold as pets for captive breeding for research or commercial purposes, for the commercial pet trade, or for any other reason. A wildlife species or exotic wildlife may be placed on the list only after the commission finds that:

- (a) the exotic wildlife would not be readily subject to control by humans while in captivity;
- (b) if released from captivity, the exotic wildlife would pose a substantial threat to native wildlife and plants or agricultural production; or
- (c) the exotic wildlife would pose a risk to human health or safety, livestock, or native wildlife through disease transmission, hybridization, or ecological or environmental damage.

(2) The commission may make exceptions for wildlife species or exotic wildlife otherwise prohibited under this section if the wildlife species or exotic wildlife is controlled in an institution listed in [87-5-709](#)(1)(a) and under any conditions specified by the commission.

87-5-713. Control of wildlife species permitted to be transplanted or introduced.

Any wildlife species listed in [87-5-714](#) or approved by the commission for introduction or transplantation may be introduced or transplanted only subject to a plan developed by the department to assure that the population can be controlled if any unforeseen harm should occur.

87-5-714. Wildlife species authorized for introduction or transplantation.

(1) The following wildlife species may be introduced or transplanted by the department based upon scientific investigation and upon approval of the commission:

- (a) gray (Hungarian) partridge (*Perdix perdix*);
- (b) chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*);
- (c) ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*);
- (d) turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*);
- (e) rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri*);
- (f) golden trout (*Salmo aquabonita*);

- (g) brown trout (*Salmo trutta*);
- (h) brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*);
- (i) lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*);
- (j) northern pike (*Esox lucius*);
- (k) black bullhead (*Ictalurus melas*);
- (l) yellow bullhead (*Ictalurus natalis*);
- (m) largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*);
- (n) smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*);
- (o) pumpkinseed sunfish (*Lepomis gibbosus*);
- (p) bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*);
- (q) green sunfish (*Lepomis cyanellus*);
- (r) rock bass (*Ambloplites rupestris*);
- (s) black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*);
- (t) white crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*);
- (u) yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*);
- (v) walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*);
- (w) cisco (tulibee) (*Coregonus artedii*);
- (x) spottail shiner (*Notropis hudsonius*);
- (y) kokanee salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*);
- (z) chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*);
- (aa) lake whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*);
- (bb) golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*).

(2) The commission may by rule and subject to the provisions of [87-5-711](#) authorize the department to transplant or introduce species of wildlife not listed in subsection (1).

87-5-715. Extermination or control of transplanted or introduced wildlife or feral species posing threat.

Any wildlife or feral species transplanted or introduced in the state may be exterminated or controlled by the department if the commission determines that the species poses harm to native wildlife or plants or to agricultural production.

87-5-716. Consultation with departments of agriculture, public health and human services, and livestock.

The commission and the department shall consult with the departments of agriculture, public health and human services, and livestock in all matters relating to the control of wildlife species and exotic wildlife that may have a harmful effect on agricultural production or livestock operations in the state or that may pose a risk to human health or safety.

87-5-721. Penalty -- license and permit revocation and denial.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2), a person who violates a provision of this part is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable as provided in [87-1-102](#), and the department, upon conviction of the person, shall revoke any license or permit issued by it under this title to the person and deny any application by the person for a license or permit under this title for a period not to exceed 2 years from the date of the conviction.

- (2) A person who intentionally imports, introduces, or transplants fish in violation of this part:
 - (a) is guilty of an offense punishable by a fine of not less than \$500 or more than \$5,000 and

imprisonment for up to 1 year. A sentencing court may consider an appropriate amount of community service in lieu of imprisonment. A sentencing court may not defer or suspend \$500 of the fine amount.

(b) is civilly liable for the amount necessary to eliminate or mitigate the effects of the violation. The damages may be recovered on behalf of the public by the department or by the county attorney of the county in which the violation occurred, in a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction. Money recovered by the department or a county attorney must be deposited in the state special revenue fund as provided in [87-1-601](#)(1).

(c) upon conviction or forfeiture of bond or bail, shall forfeit from the date of conviction or forfeiture any current hunting, fishing, or trapping license issued under this title and the privilege to hunt, fish, or trap in this state for not less than 24 months. If the time necessary to eliminate or mitigate the effects of the violation exceeds 24 months, a person may be required to forfeit the privilege to hunt, fish, or trap in this state for more than 24 months. If the effects of the violation cannot be eliminated or mitigated, a person may be required to forfeit the privilege to hunt, fish, or trap in this state for the lifetime of that person.

(3) Any exotic wildlife held in violation of this part must be shipped out of state, returned to the point of origin, or destroyed within 6 months of a conviction or sooner if ordered by the court. The person in possession of the exotic wildlife may choose the method of disposition. If the person in possession of the exotic wildlife does not comply with this requirement, the department may confiscate and then house, transport, or destroy the unlawfully held exotic wildlife. The department may charge any person convicted of a violation of this part for the costs associated with the handling, housing, transporting, or destroying of the exotic wildlife.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN GENERAL

Ecological Function and Importance of Amphibians and Reptiles

Montana's 13 native amphibians represent a valuable biological and cultural resource whose conservation is essential not only to their own survival, but to the survival of other vertebrate and invertebrate taxa as well. As larvae, amphibians structure aquatic communities by being important herbivores (e.g., Dickman 1968; Seale 1980), competitors (e.g., Werner 1992), predators (e.g., Morin 1983; Wilbur et al. 1983), and prey (e.g., Wilbur 1997). Many metamorphosing amphibians act as key links between aquatic and terrestrial food webs as they transfer energy from aquatic prey to terrestrial predators (Wilbur 1997). The importance of adult amphibians in terrestrial food webs is highlighted by their efficiency at converting the prey they consume to new animal tissue; as ectotherms they are up to 50 times more efficient than mammals or birds (Pough 1980, 1983). Their importance to terrestrial food webs is further highlighted by studies conducted in eastern deciduous forests which demonstrate that amphibians rival or exceed mammals and birds with respect to numbers, biomass, and energetics (Burton and Likens 1975a; Burton and Likens 1975b; Hairston 1987).

Amphibians also contribute a great deal to human welfare. In many impoverished societies they are among the most important sources of animal protein and many affluent societies import large quantities of frog legs for culinary purposes; the U.S. imports 1,000-2,000 tons of frog legs annually, while France imports 3.4 million tons annually (Stebbins and Cohen 1995). Amphibians have been extremely important to studies of vertebrate anatomy, neurology, physiology, embryology, developmental biology, genetics, evolutionary biology, animal behavior, and community ecology (Stebbins and Cohen 1995; Petranka 1998; Pough et al. 1998). Eggs and larvae have been extensively used in toxicological studies on the effects of chemical contaminants that may impact human health (Harfenist et al. 1989). Skin secretions of some species show promise as antibiotics and as nonaddictive pain killers that are 200 times more powerful than morphine (Stebbins and Cohen 1995). They are important in the control of insect pests such as mosquitoes (Pough et al. 1998). Amphibians are also important reminders of one of the most significant events in the evolution of vertebrate life, the movement into the terrestrial environment some 360 million years ago (Pough et al. 1998). Finally, some species are valuable bioindicators of environmental health because they have highly permeable skin and egg membranes and because they have complex life cycles with both aquatic and terrestrial life history stages that are philopatric to specific breeding, foraging, and overwintering sites connected by habitats suitable for migration (Turner 1957; Duellman and Trueb 1986; Weygoldt 1989; Wake 1991; Olson 1992; Blaustein 1993, 1994; Welsh and Ollivier 1998).

Amphibian and Reptile Biology and Disturbance Regimes Relevant to Management

Possibly the most important feature of the biology of amphibians that management plans need to address is that their complex life histories require a complex set of habitats connected by suitable migratory corridors. At higher latitudes all amphibians require suitable breeding/rearing, foraging and overwintering habitats in order to survive (e.g., Turner 1957, Dole 1965; Ewert 1969). Many amphibians require warmer lentic waters with emergent vegetation for breeding/rearing habitat, riparian areas that support large insect populations for foraging habitat, and terrestrial burrows, forest litter, or deep waters that are unlikely to freeze for overwintering habitats (Nussbaum et al. 1983; Stebbins and Cohen 1995). Loss or exclusion from any one of these habitats, or loss of the resources they contain, may cause the species to decline or be extirpated from a local area unless individuals dispersing from nearby areas recolonize (e.g., Hecnar and M'Closkey 1996; Patla 1997). In cases where all 3 of these habitats are present in a relatively small geographic area herpetofauna often do not undergo extensive migrations between overwintering, breeding, and foraging habitats (Sinsch 1990). In these instances, isolated populations may successfully perpetuate themselves unless the specific area is altered by natural succession or anthropogenic activity (e.g., Gulve 1994). In cases where the 3 required habitat types are isolated spatially, herpetofauna are capable of undertaking quite extensive seasonal migrations (e.g., Sinsch 1990; Dodd 1996). In these instances, they are not only dependent on suitable breeding, foraging and overwintering habitats, but are also dependent on habitats suitable for migration (Dodd and Cade 1998). Coupled with the importance of considering all habitat requirements is the importance of considering the extreme philopatry shown by many herpetofauna species to the same breeding, foraging and overwintering sites year after year (Daugherty and Sheldon 1982; Sinsch 1990; Stebbins and Cohen 1995; Pough et al. 1998).

In order to ensure the presence of habitats critical to the survival of amphibians management plans need to consider the disturbance regimes that create and maintain them. Disturbance regimes that create and drive the succession of breeding, foraging, and overwintering habitats used by amphibian species include glaciation, flooding, fire, and the dam building, wallowing, and foraging activities of beaver and other large mammals. The majority of standing water bodies in western Montana and on the plains north of the Missouri River in eastern Montana are the result of Pleistocene glaciation (Alt and Hyndman 1986, 1995). Flooding carves out depressions and eliminates vegetation so that important breeding, foraging, and basking habitats are maintained (Lind et al. 1996; Cavallo 1997). Standing water bodies that are used as breeding and overwintering sites are created and maintained as the result of the dam building and foraging activities of beaver (Donkor and Fryxell 1999; Russell et al. 1999a) and the foraging and wallowing activities of large mammals such as moose, elk, and bear (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Beaver seem to be particularly important in the maintenance of standing waterbodies in western Montana. For example where historic fur trapping has eliminated beaver from some mountain ranges in the central portion of the state many water bodies are approaching their final successional stages as they fill in with sediments (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.; Grant Hokit, Carroll College, pers. comm.). Finally, periodic fires may act to maintain open waters by eliminating vegetation that catches sediment, and may contribute to the amount of downed woody debris that provides habitat for terrestrial amphibians (Russell et al 1999b).

Global Amphibian Declines

In the past few hundred years, increases in human population and our ability to impact natural ecosystems have led to a dramatic increase in the global rate of species extinction (Wilson and Peter 1988). Within this overall biodiversity crisis, evidence has accumulated during the past few decades that amphibians around the globe may be declining at a higher rate than other taxonomic groups (Blaustein and Wake 1990; Phillips 1990; Wyman 1990; Wake and Morowitz 1991; Drost and Fellers 1996; Alford and Richards 2000; Houlahan et al. 2000; but see Pechmann and Wilbur 1994). In North America, amphibian declines have been most numerous in the West and have occurred among species that occupy a variety of elevations, habitat types, and disturbance regimes (Corn 1994).

Seven major factors, and their interaction, have been implicated as causative agents of amphibian declines. These include: (1) loss, deterioration, and fragmentation of aquatic and terrestrial habitats (e.g., Bury et al. 1980; Schwalbe 1993; Van Rooy and Stumpel 1995; Lind et al. 1996; Beebee 1997); (2) introduction of nonindigenous species (e.g., Bradford 1989; Fisher and Schaffer 1996; Gamradt and Kats 1996; Kupferberg 1996; Adams 1997; Hecnar and M'Closkey 1997; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1997a); (3) environmental pollutants (e.g., Lewis et al. 1985; Kirk 1988; Beebee et al. 1990; Dunson et al. 1992); (4) increased ambient UV-B radiation (e.g., Blaustein et al. 1994a; Blaustein et al. 1995; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1995; Nagl and Hofer 1997); (5) climate change (e.g., Pounds and Crump 1994; Stewart 1995; Pounds et al. 1999); (6) pathogens (e.g., Carey 1993; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1997b; Berger et al. 1998; Carey et al. 1999; Daszak et al. 1999; Lips 1999) and (7) human commerce (e.g. Nace and Rosen 1979; Jennings and Hayes 1985; Buck 1997; Pough et al. 1998). Not surprisingly, a majority of these factors have also been implicated as causative agents of the overall decline in biodiversity (Wilson and Peters 1988). Thus, the conspicuous decline of amphibian populations may indeed be a good indication of the declining health of our environment.

In recent years concerns over environmental health have also been raised by the issue of amphibian deformities, an issue that seems to be completely distinct from that of amphibian declines because declines have not been reported in the species and areas where deformities have been found. Most amphibian deformities that have been reported involve missing, deformed, or multiple hind limbs (Bishop and Hamilton 1947; Sessions and Ruth 1990; Ouellet et al 1997; Sessions et al. 1999; Johnson et al. 1999). In Montana missing, malformed, and multiple hind limb deformities have been found in western toads (*Bufo boreas*), Pacific treefrogs (*Pseudacris regilla*), and Columbia spotted frogs (*Rana luteiventris*) at a few sites in the western portion of the state and have been reported as early as 1958 (Hebard and Brunson 1963; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Suggested causes of deformities include UVB radiation (e.g., Blaustein et al. 1997), contaminants including pesticides containing retinoic acid (Scadding and Madden 1986; Bryant and Gardiner 1992; Sessions 1999) and infection by a nematode parasite in the genus *Ribeiroia* (Johnson 1999; Kaiser 1999). Currently evidence favors two of these mechanisms, contaminants in the midwestern United States and nematode parasites in the western United States (Souder 2000). The *Ribeiroia* parasite has been documented in populations of the Pacific treefrog and the Columbia spotted frog in western Montana and may be the cause of limb deformities in western toads (Pieter Johnson, Claremont McKenna College, pers. comm.). Deformities apparently result from the amphibian larvae's response to the mechanical perturbation of the cysts the parasites

form after they burrow through the larvae's body wall because mechanical implants of resin beads result in almost identical deformities (Sessions and Ruth 1990; Johnson et al. 1999). While it is uncertain how long or to what extent this phenomena has occurred, accelerated eutrophication of waters due to organic pollution may cause planorbid snail (the first host of *Ribeiroia*) numbers to rise, thereby increasing the rate of parasite infection and deformities (Johnson 1999).

Montana's 13 native amphibians occupy a diverse array of habitats and vary greatly in their life history patterns (Reichel and Flath 1995; Hart et al. 1998). Furthermore, relatively few studies have investigated the impacts of human activities on amphibians. Thus, identification of all possible impacts on Montana's amphibians, and development of a comprehensive set of guidelines that would mitigate these impacts, are not possible at this time. However, because 60-70% of the predicted ranges of these species are in private lands without any formal protection from conversion of natural habitat types to anthropogenic habitat types (Hart et al. 1998; Redmond et al. 1998) a review of likely impacts is appropriate in order to ensure the viability of these populations on public lands. A review of the scientific literature identified nine major risk factors that may affect the viability of amphibian populations. In no particular order they are:

1. Timber harvest
2. Grazing
3. Fire and fire management activities
4. Nonindigenous species and their management
5. Road and trail development and on- and off-road vehicle use
6. Development and management of recreational facilities and water impoundments
7. Harvest and commerce
8. Habitat fragmentation and metapopulation impacts
9. Lack of information / research needs

Specific areas of concern associated with each of these themes and a general set of management guidelines that would allow impacts to be minimized are addressed individually below.

Timber Harvest

The timing and extent of the impacts of timber harvest on Montana's amphibians likely depend on the preferred habitat, physiological adaptations, and dispersal abilities of individual species as well as the spatial, extent, location, and configuration of the harvest, the timing and method of harvest, and the speed of forest regeneration. deMaynadier and Hunter (1995) conducted a thorough review of literature on forest management and amphibian ecology in North America. In 18 studies that examined the effects of clear-cutting on amphibians they found that most amphibians (toads were sometimes an exception) were always present at lower median abundances on 6 month to 40 year old clear-cuts as compared to control plots. However, clear taxonomic differences existed: amphibians in general were 3.5 times greater on control plots; anurans (frogs and toads) were 1.7 times greater; salamanders in general were 4.3 times greater; and plethodontid salamanders were 5.0 times greater. While these reductions in species' abundances may result in some impacts on the food chain, by themselves reductions in abundance may be an acceptable consequence of timber harvest as long as species are able to persist and abundances are not reduced in the long run. Species richness may, therefore, be a more important measure of the impacts of timber harvest because it may indicate the addition or extirpation of species as a result of harvest. deMaynadier and Hunter (1995) found that patterns of species richness between clearcut and control plots across the 18 studies were less conclusive. In most studies species richness values were not changed. However, clear decreases in species richness have been reported by several studies in the Pacific Northwest and most of these indicate the loss of species that are dependent on healthy stream, streamside, or other moist microhabitats. For example, in a study of four streamside amphibians in Oregon and Washington, Corn and Bury (1989) reported that only 1 of 20 streams in logged stands contained all four species as compared to 11 of 23 streams in uncut stands. Furthermore, only 2 of the streams in the uncut stands had fewer than three species, whereas 11 streams in the logged stands had only 1 or no species present. Similarly, a number of other studies in the Pacific Northwest have reported that stream dwelling amphibians such as the tailed frog (*Ascaphus truei*) were absent or found in greatly reduced numbers in clear cuts versus mature or old growth forests, apparently as a result of decreased canopy cover and increased sedimentation (Bury 1983; Bury and Corn 1988; Corn and Bury 1990; Welsh 1990; Welsh and Lind 1988). Finally, it should be noted that many of the negative impacts associated with timber harvest may be associated with the building and maintenance of roads and road traffic (see section on road impacts below). For instance sedimentation of streams has major impacts on stream dwelling amphibians (e.g., Welsh and Lind 1998) and 90% of the sediment runoff from some harvest operations comes from roads (Anderson et al. 1976).

Although positive impacts of timber harvest have rarely been reported there may be some instances in which some amphibian species benefit. For example, in higher gradient streams, Pacific giant salamanders (*Dicamptodon ensatus*) have been documented to increase in the abundance in cut stands, apparently as a result of warmer water temperatures, increased light, and increased insect or salmonid prey (Murphy and Hall 1981; Murphy et al. 1981; Hawkins et al. 1983; Bury and Corn 1988). However, it should be noted that these apparent benefits do not hold for all streams because in lower gradient streams increased sedimentation associated with harvested stands eliminates microhabitats used by Pacific giant salamanders and other stream dwelling amphibians (Connor et al. 1988; Corn and Bury 1989). Depending on the scale of

timber harvest positive impacts on individual species may include forest openings that benefit more terrestrial species by creating basking or foraging sites (e.g., Raphael 1988; Kirkland et al. 1996) and the creation of habitat by debris left over from harvest activities. For example, Bury and Martin (1973) and Bury (1983) both found that the clouded salamander (*Aneides ferreus*) was more abundant in second-growth stands, apparently because the species uses crevices and bark under downed timber. In addition, limited removal of forest trees immediately adjacent to standing waters that are used for breeding may enhance the length of time ephemeral wetlands are present by reducing evapotranspiration and may reduce the length of the larval period of many amphibians by increasing solar radiation, thereby ensuring that metamorphosis takes place prior to pond drying (deMaynadier and Hunter 1999; Russell et al. 1999b). For example, McGraw (1997) found that larval long-toed salamanders (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*) were more abundant in ponds where a fraction of the pond margin was harvested than either ponds whose margins were completely harvested or ponds whose forest margins were completely intact.

Both the taxonomic differences in abundance and species diversity resulting from timber harvest highlight the importance of considering the individual needs of species and indicate that amphibians that rely almost exclusively on moist microhabitats or streams are likely to be the most heavily impacted by timber harvest activities. In Montana forest species that utilize these habitats include the long-toed salamander, the Coeur d'Alene salamander (*Plethodon idahoensis*), the tailed frog, and the Pacific treefrog. Unfortunately, the impacts of timber harvest has only been studied for one of these species in Montana and many of the findings for coastal sites in the Pacific Northwest may not be directly applicable here because of differences in precipitation and forest types. In a study of the long-toed salamander in Douglas-fir forests in the Swan River Valley McGraw (1997) found that areas where overstory removal (250-300 trees harvested per hectare) and new forestry (leave 13-25 dominant tree species per hectare and retain all snags and hardwoods) harvest techniques were applied had less ground cover, higher soil temperatures, and 75% fewer terrestrial salamanders than control plots. He suggested that retention of greater amounts of all types of forest debris and understory vegetation may mitigate these impacts. In their review of the management of the Coeur d'Alene salamander Groves et al. (1996) suggest that the impacts of timber harvest at sites known or likely to support populations be mitigated by: (1) avoiding concentration of harvest activities in headwater subdrainages; (2) using partial cutting that maintains at least 60% canopy cover; (3) ensuring that forest harvest activities provide for recruitment of woody debris; (4) reducing ground disturbance by winter harvesting and using low ground pressure tracked vehicles; (5) carrying out harvest activities during periods of salamander are not active on the ground surface (dry periods in the summer or during the winter); and (6) maintaining 30 meter forest buffers along both sides of all streams. Maintenance of buffer zones around streams has also been suggested by Corn and Bury (1989) (7.6-15.0 meters) and deMaynadier and Hunter (1995) (30-100 meters). A study in the Blue Mountains of Oregon provides evidence that stream buffers do provide protection for tailed frogs in drier forests similar to those found across much of Montana. Bull and Carter (1996) found that the number of tailed frogs was best predicted by a combination of stream substrates and the presence of stream buffers. deMaynadier and Hunter (1995) note that adjusting buffers proportionally to (1) stream width, (2) the intensity of the adjacent harvest, and (3) the slope of the area is likely to result in the most appropriate and efficient application of buffers. Finally, if buffers are applied it is important to ensure that they represent the habitat needs and home range

of the animals they are designed to protect (Burke and Gibbons 1995). Unfortunately, information on the home range size of Montana's amphibians is virtually non-existent.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The impacts (both positive and negative) of timber harvest and subsequent forest succession on all amphibians that inhabit Montana's forests should be formally studied using sound experimental designs that gather pre-harvest data as well as a time series of post-harvest data. This should be done for stream and seep dwelling amphibians as well as those that use permanent and ephemeral standing waters.
2. When planning a timber harvest the area impacted by the harvest should be thoroughly surveyed for all amphibian species in order to identify the likely impacts of the harvest activities. Special emphasis should be placed on detecting the presence of Coeur d'Alene salamanders and tailed frogs because of their dependence on moist microhabitats and known sensitivities to timber harvest.
3. Harvested areas should leave 30 meter forest buffers along both sides of all streams (especially headwater streams) in order to prevent sedimentation of streams and desiccation of moist microhabitats adjacent to streams.
4. Timber harvest should not be allowed in areas that serve as refugia for the Coeur d'Alene salamander because of the species' dependence on moist microhabitats and the fact that populations of this species are usually isolated from one another by long distances, thereby eliminating the opportunity for recolonization.
5. Timber management practices that make use of intensive site preparation, such as plantations, and practices that modify levels of coarse woody debris and other microhabitats should not be used extensively. Harvest practices which minimize the immediate and long-term differences in abundance and distribution of moist microhabitats (e.g., woody debris or undergrowth) between harvested and nonharvested areas are preferred.
6. In areas that prove to be critical breeding, foraging, or overwintering habitat, timber harvest should be limited to periods of inactivity by amphibians (drier periods in the summer or during the winter) and during harvest ground disturbance should be minimized with low ground pressure tracked vehicles.

Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing is one of the most widespread land management practices in western North America (70% of the western United States is grazed) and has been associated with negative impacts on a variety of plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate taxa (Fleischner 1994). However, studies reporting the impacts of livestock grazing on amphibians are virtually nonexistent. Livestock have been documented to cause the direct mortality of amphibians as a result of trampling. Individual northern leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*) and woodhouse's toads (*Bufo woodhousii*) have been found crushed at the bottoms of cattle hoove prints at the margins of several wetlands in eastern Montana (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). In some instances trampling can result in severe population-level impacts. For example, after what may have been the first successful reproductive event at a site in southeastern Idaho in 10 years Bartelt (1998) documented the deaths of thousands of western toad metamorphs when 500-1,000 sheep were herded through the drying pond the toadlets were concentrated around. He found that hundreds of animals had been directly killed underfoot and hundreds more died soon afterward as a result of dessication because the vegetation they had been hiding in had been trampled to the point that it no longer provided a moist microhabitat.

Riparian areas often provide critical breeding, foraging, and overwintering habitats and frequently serve as migratory or dispersal corridors for amphibians. These areas are also usually the preferred habitat of livestock (Kauffman and Krueger 1984; Fleischner 1994) so grazing likely has a number of indirect impacts on amphibian populations. In certain areas one possible positive impact may be that mechanical clearing of vegetation opens up basking areas that amphibians require (Bill Leonard, Washington State D.O.T., pers. comm.; Dick Tracy, University of Nevada at Reno, pers. comm.). In addition, in some areas livestock defecation and subsequent eutrophication of waters may benefit some amphibian larvae via a bottom-up control of the food web (Reaser 1996). Another possible positive impact of livestock grazing is the increased number of water bodies available to amphibians because of tanks and dams used for watering; assuming the hydroperiod is not long enough to allow exotic or native predators to become established (Scott 1996).

Unfortunately, it is likely that the majority of indirect impacts on amphibians are negative (Jones 1988). For example, contamination of waters through livestock defecation may increase fecal coliform counts and lead to mass mortality events and life history changes such as those documented and suspected, respectively, for the tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) (Worthylake and Hovingh 1989; Pfenning et al. 1991). Furthermore, eutrophication of waters through fecal contamination may cause planorbid snail numbers to rise, thereby increasing the number of nematode parasites and the rate of parasite infection that subsequently lead to limb deformities in amphibians (Johnson 1999). Livestock also cause major changes in the bank structure, substrate composition and vegetation in riparian habitats (Kauffman and Krueger 1984; Fleischner 1994). Elimination of bankside vegetation and collapse of overhanging banks reduces the number of moist non freezing microhabitats that are required by many amphibian species during summer foraging and overwinter periods, respectively. Compaction of soils in the riparian area may eliminate the ability of many species to burrow underground in order to prevent dessication or freezing (Duellman and Trueb 1986; Swanson et al. 1996). The collapse of banks leads to increased sedimentation which has negative impacts on stream dwelling

amphibians such as the tailed frog (Kauffman and Krueger 1984; Corn and Bury 1989; Bull and Carter 1996). Loss of bankside willows may result in reduced beaver activity or possibly even the extirpation of beaver; a species whose activities are responsible for the creation of a large portion of amphibian breeding habitats (Donkor and Fryxell 1999; Russell et al. 1999a). Grazing may also reduce the number of insect prey that amphibians are dependent on (Fleischner 1994). Finally, a number of amphibian species may be highly dependent on the burrows created by prairie dogs and other small mammals (Reading et al. 1989; Sharps and Uresk 1990; Scott 1996). Loss of prairie dogs as a result of control programs associated with the protection of livestock from injury is, therefore, likely to have major impacts on grassland amphibians.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The impact of different livestock grazing regimes on amphibian populations should be formally investigated using sound experimental designs.
2. Livestock should be fenced from all or portions of water bodies that are critical breeding habitat in order to prevent mass mortality as a result of disease or trampling at or prior to the time of metamorphosis.
3. Livestock should be fenced from all or portions of riparian areas that provide critical breeding, foraging, or overwintering habitats or that serve as important migratory or dispersal corridors in order to protect these critical areas from damage.
4. Hydroperiods of waterbodies should not be altered in order to provide water for livestock.
5. Prairie dog control efforts undertaken to prevent harm to livestock should be eliminated in order to conserve critical summer refugia and overwintering habitats.

Fire and Fire Management Activities

Although the impacts of fire and fire management activities have been investigated for a number of vertebrates (e.g., Lyon et al. 1978; DeBano et al. 1998), impacts on amphibians have received virtually no attention at all (Russell et al. 1999b). Furthermore, the little attention that has been given has been focused on scrub forests in the southeastern United States (Vogl 1973) hardwood and pine forests in the northeastern United States (Kirkland et al. 1996; McLeod and Gates 1998), and chaparral communities in California and Australia (Friend 1993; Gamradt and Kats 1997; Hannah and Smith 1997). The sparse amount of research may in part be due to the belief that the wet areas occupied by many amphibian species act as refugia from fire or that many amphibians are inactive in burrows during the dry season when fires are more frequent. Vogl's (1973) observations of a large breeding chorus of *Hyla crucifer* in a Florida wetland surrounded by still-smoking ashes and Friend's (1993) finding that most Australian anurans (frogs and toads) were inactive in burrows during the dry season support this contention. However, wildfire, prescribed fire, and fire control actions are all likely to have both direct and indirect impacts on amphibians.

Direct mortality of amphibians as a result of fire has been documented in wetlands (Vogl 1973) and the relatively low vagility of many amphibian species (Sinsch 1990) indicates that species that inhabit forest vegetation may face high rates of fire induced mortality (Friend 1993; Russell et al. 1999b; Papp and Papp 2000). However, the population-level impacts of direct fire induced mortality have not been examined. Indirect effects of fire may be either positive or negative. For instance, increased sedimentation following a chaparral wildfire in California reduced the number of stream pools and was apparently related to reduced numbers of California newt (*Taricha granulosa*) egg masses (Gamradt and Kats 1997). Furthermore, fire may remove the forest canopy, downed logs, leaf litter, and other structures that create moist microhabitats suitable for amphibians. This may be why both Mushinsky (1985) and McLeod and Gates (1998) found amphibian species present in greater numbers in unburned scrub and pineforest, respectively, relative to adjacent burned areas. However, fire may also have positive indirect effects by creating openings that allow more terrestrial amphibians to bask and forage (Kirkland et al. 1996). Fire may also positively impact amphibian populations by removing vegetation and opening wetlands to an earlier succession stage, thereby enhancing the life of the wetland (Russell et al. 1999b). In addition removal of forest trees immediately adjacent to wetlands may enhance the length of time ephemeral wetlands are present by reducing evapotranspiration (Russell et al. 1999b) and may reduce the length of the larval period of many amphibians by increasing solar radiation, thereby ensuring that metamorphosis takes place prior to pond drying.

The impacts of prescribed fire and fire management activities have not been investigated, but may present some serious risks to amphibian populations. For instance many of Montana's amphibians are most active on the ground surface during moist periods in the spring and fall (e.g., Turner 1957; Beneski et al. 1986; Hill 1995) when most prescribed burns take place. As these animals migrate between terrestrial and aquatic habitats they may be particularly susceptible to fire because many migrate in mass (e.g., DeLacey 1876) and most remain closer to the ground surface where they may be more easily reached by flames. Fire control activities may also present a risk to amphibians. The large volumes of water required for control efforts may decrease wetland hydroperiods and thereby desiccate larvae before they are capable of

metamorphoses (Rowe and Dunson 1995; Skelly 1996). Finally, no published studies of the impacts of aerially dropped fire retardant slurries on amphibian larvae were found, but it is reasonable to assume that these retardants may be toxic to amphibian larvae or adults.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The impacts of wildfire, prescribed burns on terrestrial and aquatic amphibians should be formally investigated so that the impacts of both the timing and magnitude of fire and the subsequent succession of vegetation can be understood.
2. The toxicity of commonly used fire retardants to amphibians should be investigated for both terrestrial and aquatic species and/or life history stages at different periods of time after application.
3. Radio telemetry studies should be conducted for all amphibian species in order to gain a better understanding of how far they migrate to and from aquatic breeding habitats so that the spatial context of the impacts of wildfire, prescribed burns, and fire control efforts can be better understood.
4. Prescribed burns should not be conducted outside of the normal fire season in areas where amphibian species are present as disjunct populations unless research indicates the population is not widely present in habitat that will be impacted by the burn (i.e. on the ground surface or in vegetation that will burn).

Nonindigenous Species and Their Management

Impacts of Nonindigenous Fish

At least 52 species of fish belonging to 14 families have been introduced in Montana (Nico and Fuller 1999; Fuller et al. 1999). Of these species, 9 belonging to 3 families have been widely introduced for recreational fishing and have been implicated in the decline of native amphibians across the globe (Sexton and Phillips 1986; Bahls 1992; Bradford et al. 1993; Bronmark and Endenham 1994; Brana et al. 1996; Hecnar and M'Closkey 1997a; Fuller et al. 1999). These species include pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), blue gill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), and smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*) in the family Centrarchidae, yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) in the family Percidae, and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*), brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) in the family Salmonidae. Introductions of warm water centrarchids and percids and cold water salmonids have undoubtedly been made into a number of low-elevation water bodies that support or formerly supported amphibian communities. However, introductions of salmonids at higher elevations, which began as early as the 1880s (Jordan 1891), are likely to have had a particularly important impact on native amphibian communities inhabiting high (>800 meters) mountain lakes because 95% of these lakes in the western United States were naturally fishless prior to stocking (Bahls 1992). Thus, historically, as many as 15,000 lakes at elevations greater than 800 meters in the western United States may have supported native amphibian communities without the threat of predation or competition from fish. Presently, about 9,500 of the West's high-elevation lakes and virtually all of the deeper lakes contain introduced salmonids (Bahls 1992). In Montana, approximately 47% of the state's 1,650 high-elevation lakes now contain nonindigenous salmonids (Bahls 1992).

Egg, larval, and adult amphibians may be subject to direct predation by introduced warm and cold water fishes (e.g., Korschgen and Baskett 1963; Licht 1969; Semlitsch and Gibbons 1988; Liss and Larson 1991). Similarly, all 3 amphibian life history stages are likely to be indirectly effected by the threat of predation due to (1) adult avoidance of oviposition sites where predators are present (e.g. Resetarits and Wilbur 1989; Hopey and Petranka 1994), (2) decreased larval foraging and, therefore, growth rates as a result of staying in refuges to avoid predators (e.g., Figiel and Semlitsch 1990; Skelly 1992; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1998; Tyler et al. 1998), and (3) decreased adult foraging, growth rates, and overwinter survival as a result of avoiding areas with fishes (e.g., Bradford 1983).

Impacts of Chemical Management of Sport Fisheries

Rotenone and commercial piscicides containing rotenone have often been used to remove unwanted fish stocks from a variety of aquatic habitats (Schnick 1974). The impacts of rotenone-containing piscicides on amphibians and turtles were recently reviewed by Fontenot et al. (1994) and McCoid and Bettoli (1996). They found the range of lethal doses of rotenone-containing piscicides for amphibian larvae (0.1-0.580 mg/L) to overlap to a large extent with lethal doses for fish (0.0165-0.665 mg/L), and to be much lower than the concentrations commonly used in fisheries management (0.5-3.0 mg/L). Furthermore, they reviewed, a number of studies that noted substantial mortality of nontarget amphibian larvae. However, the effects of rotenone on newly metamorphosed and adult amphibians was found to vary with the degree of each species' aquatic respiration and their likelihood of exiting treated water bodies (Fontenot et

al. 1994; McCoid and Bettoli 1996). Hockin et al. (1985) reduced nontarget mortality of amphibian larvae by providing several untreated refuge areas that could be accessed through Netlon fence divisions and by protecting one refuge area containing high densities of amphibian larvae by placing a sheet of hessian sacking soaked in a saturated potassium permanganate solution that neutralized the rotenone. The nontarget effects of another piscicide, antimycin, have apparently not been formally studied, but preliminary observations seem to indicate that antimycin is also toxic to amphibian larvae (Patla 1998). In Montana all amphibian larvae as well as tailed frog adults use some sort of aquatic respiration or may be unlikely to exit treated water bodies depending on the time of day (Daugherty and Sheldon 1982). Thus, all amphibian species are likely to suffer mortality if piscicides are applied to waters they inhabit.

Impacts of Nonindigenous Bullfrogs

Bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*) are native to the United States east of a line extending from northwest Wisconsin to south central Texas (Bury and Whelan 1984). However, they have now been widely introduced into permanent waters in all lower forty-eight states, with the possible exception of North Dakota, and have been implicated in the declines of a number of amphibian and reptile species throughout this area (Moyle 1973; Hammerson 1982; Bury and Whelan 1984; Kupferberg 1994; Rosen et al. 1995; Kupferberg 1997; Lawler et al. 1999). The impetus for bullfrog introduction seems largely to be due to their use as a recreational hunting and food item, apparently, in some cases, as a result of native frogs having already declined because of human hunting and consumption (Bury and Whelan 1984; Jennings and Hayes 1985). In Montana, bullfrogs were introduced for unknown reasons into the Bitterroot Valley sometime prior to 1968 and they are now continuously distributed along much of the lower Bitterroot, Flathead, and Clark Fork Rivers as well as a few other isolated localities around the state (Black 1969a; 1969b; Werner and Reichel 1994; Reichel 1995; Hendricks and Reichel 1996; Werner et al. 1998). Unfortunately, bullfrogs continue to be introduced into new sites from source populations both inside and outside of Montana despite the fact that unauthorized introduction or transplantation of wildlife into the natural environment is prohibited by Montana law (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.; Levell 1995; MCA 87-5-711).

All 3 life history stages of amphibians may be subject to direct predation by adult bullfrogs (e.g., Korschgen and Baskett 1963; Carpenter and Morrison 1973; Bury and Whelan 1984; Clarkson and DeVos 1986). Additionally, both the eggs and larvae of native amphibians may be preyed upon by larval bullfrogs (e.g., Ehrlich 1979; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1997a). Furthermore, egg, larval and adult amphibians are also likely to be indirectly effected by the threat of predation due to (1) adult avoidance of oviposition sites where predators are present (e.g., Resetarits and Wilbur 1989), (2) decreased larval foraging and, therefore, growth rates as a result of staying in refuges to avoid predators (e.g., Kiesecker 1997; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1998), and (3) decreased adult foraging and growth rates as a result of avoiding areas with bullfrogs. Native amphibian larvae or adults may also be subject to chemically mediated interference competition (e.g., Petranks 1989; Griffiths et al. 1993) or exploitative competition for resources (e.g., Kupferberg 1997). Finally, predators that are dependent on larval or adult amphibians as a food source may also be impacted as a result of the loss of native amphibian larvae and the presence of larger bullfrog tadpoles and adults that they are unable to efficiently forage on (e.g., Kupferberg 1994).

Impacts of Nonindigenous Species as Vectors for Pathogens

Reports of mass mortality of amphibians due to pathogens are increasingly common (e.g., Nyman 1986; Worthylake and Hovingh 1989; Carey 1993; Blaustein et al. 1994b; Berger et al. 1998, Carey et al. 1999; Daszak 1999; Lips 1999). Nonindigenous species, such as bullfrogs and other amphibians that are sold in pet stores, and introduced centrarchid, percid, and salmonid fishes, may act as vectors for amphibian pathogens. For example, the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* is now the primary suspect for amphibian declines in Australia, Central America, and the Western United States, and many amphibians exported to pet stores in the United States come from these areas (Daszak et al. 1999, 2000). Similarly, the water fungus *Saprolegnia*, a common pathogen of fish species reared and released from fish hatcheries, has recently been associated with declines of amphibian populations (Blaustein et al. 1994b). Releasing hatchery-raised fish may, therefore, increase the inoculation rate and lead to declines in native amphibian populations. Laurance et al. (1996) suggest that declines in stream-dwelling amphibian populations in Australia are caused by an unknown pathogen and hypothesize that nonindigenous species, such as the cane toad (*Bufo marinus*) and aquarium fish, are responsible for the introduction of the pathogen. Similarly, nonindigenous organisms may change environmental conditions leading to enhanced survival and number of pathogens. For example, Worthylake and Hovingh (1989) found that elevated nitrogen levels, caused by high numbers of sheep, increased bacterial concentrations and lead to periodic mass mortality of salamanders. Finally, pathogens may act synergistically with other natural and anthropogenically caused environmental stressors. For example, Kiesecker and Blaustein (1995) found that an interaction between UV-B radiation and *Saprolegnia* fungus enhanced the mortality of amphibian embryos.

Impacts of Weeds and Weed and Pest Management Activities

Noxious weeds may be spread by the use of off-road vehicles, watercraft, recreational livestock use, and camping activities. There is little knowledge of the impacts that weeds have on amphibian communities. However, nonindigenous aquatic and terrestrial weeds often form dense stands that are likely to exclude native amphibians and enhance the probability of successful introduction of other exotic species. For example, there is some evidence that the survival of exotic bullfrogs is enhanced by the presence of exotic aquatic vegetation, which provides habitat more suitable to the bullfrogs (Kupferberg 1996).

Management of weeds and insect pests with chemical herbicides and pesticides can have major impacts on amphibian communities. In particular, several features of amphibian biology may enhance their susceptibility to chemical contamination (Stebbins and Cohen 1995). The life history of most amphibians involves both aquatic larvae and terrestrial adults, allowing exposure to toxicants in both habitats. Many amphibians have skin with vascularization in the epidermis and little keratinization, allowing easy absorption of many toxicants. In fact, many studies have demonstrated the effects of chemical contamination on amphibians (reviewed in Cooke 1981; Hall and Henry 1992; Boyer and Grue 1995; Carey and Bryant 1995). The effects range from direct mortality to sublethal effects such as depressed disease resistance, inhibition of growth and development, decreased reproductive ability, inhibition of predator avoidance behaviors, and morphological abnormalities.

Currently, there are no requirements for testing the toxicity of herbicides and pesticides on amphibians (Hall and Henry 1992). Furthermore, there are no water quality criteria established for amphibians (Boyer and Grue 1995). It is often assumed that criteria for mammals, birds, and fish will incorporate the protection needed for amphibians. The few chemicals that have been tested with fish and larval amphibians suggest that tadpoles may be more vulnerable to some toxicants than others (Hall and Henry 1992; Boyer and Grue 1995). Several studies have examined the acute (lethal) toxicity of herbicides and pesticides on amphibians. Saunders (1970) and Harfenist et al. (1989) reviewed the effects of 25 and 211 different pollutants, respectively. However, it is important to recognize sublethal effects as well. Johnson and Prine (1976) found that organophosphates affect the thermal tolerance of western toad tadpoles. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and organochlorines can disrupt corticosterone production and inhibit glucogenesis (Gendron et al. 1997). Many pesticides result in decreased growth rate and inhibition of a predator response in amphibians (e.g., Berrill et al. 1993; Berrill et al. 1994).

Many of the newer pesticides and herbicides are designed to decompose soon after application. Although still toxic, presumably this reduces the impact area and, thus, the number of exposed individuals. However, many of the older chemicals may still be present in sediments. For example, Russell et al. (1995) found potentially toxic levels of DDT in tissues of spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*) at Point Pelee National Park, Ontario, even though DDT had not been used in the area for 26 years. Levels as high as 1,188 µg/kg were found in spring peepers and implicate DDT as a possible causative agent in the local extinction of several amphibian populations.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The impacts of introduced fish, bullfrogs, weeds, and pathogens on Montana's native amphibians should be formally investigated.
2. Introduction of nonindigenous fish species should be limited to areas where they have already been introduced and nonindigenous fish should be removed from waters that act as key overwintering or breeding sites for amphibians.
3. Streams and lakes should be thoroughly surveyed for amphibians prior to and after the application of piscicides in order to identify impacts of piscicide application.
4. If lakes are to be treated with piscicides, they should be treated in late summer after most amphibian larvae have metamorphosed and before adults enter deeper water bodies for overwintering. When amphibians are present an effort should be made to remove them before treatments begin.
5. Piscicides should not be used in streams containing tailed frogs because of the possibility of removing multiple larval and adult cohorts. Other methods of removal should be explored in these instances. If piscicide use is the only option available then pretreatment gathering and posttreatment restocking of tailed frog tadpoles and adults should be undertaken and treatment should occur in the late evening hours so that adults are more likely to exit waters.
6. The public should be educated on the possible impacts of bullfrogs on native communities and be made aware of the fact that it is illegal to introduce them into the wild in Montana.
7. Where possible, bullfrog populations should be removed. Removal may be accomplished by altering habitats from permanent waters that support exotic bullfrogs, fish, and aquatic weeds to ephemeral habitats that support native species. Removal may also be accomplished by surrounding waterbodies with a drift fence and subsequently draining the water body in the

late fall after bullfrogs have moved into overwintering sites. Individuals can then either be captured by hand or left to dessicate and/or freeze.

8. The Montana state legislature could further prohibit the introduction of bullfrogs by designating them a species that is detrimental to Montana's native flora and fauna (Levell 1995; MCA 87-5-712).
9. Because animals sold in pet stores can act as vectors for pathogens they should be examined and formally certified as free of pathogens such as the chytrid fungus which seems to be responsible for amphibian population declines around the world and in the western United States.
10. The impacts of commonly used herbicides and pesticides on all life history stages of all of Montana's amphibians should be formally investigated. In the meantime herbicide and pesticide use should be limited to brands that rapidly decompose after application, and herbicides and pesticides should not be sprayed within 100 meters of water bodies or wetlands. Alternative methods of weed and pest removal should be used in these areas.

Road and Trail Development and On- and Off-Road Vehicle Use

Road Kill

Many studies have reported large numbers of amphibians killed on roadways. Ehmann and Cogger (1985) estimated that five million reptiles and frogs are killed annually on Australian roads. Thousands of amphibians may be killed in a single population if they undertake a mass migration to or from breeding habitats across a road (e.g., Koch and Peterson 1995; Langton 1989). Wyman (1991, as cited in deMaynadier and Hunter 1995) reported mortality rates ranging from 50.3 to 100% for individuals of three salamander species that tried to cross a paved rural road in New York. Although the number of mortalities reported in road-kill studies is alarming, only a few studies have taken the extra step to demonstrate an impact of such mortality at the population level (e.g., Lehtinen et al. 1999). Vos and Chardon (1998) found that the density of roads within 250 meters of a pond site was negatively associated with the size of moor frog (*Rana arvalis*) populations. Furthermore, the density of roads within 750 meters of a pond site was negatively associated with the probability that the pond would be occupied at all. van Gelder (1973) estimated that 30% of the females from a local breeding population of the common toad (*Bufo bufo*) succumbed to road kill and reported that an equivalent percentage for males was likely. Kuhn (1987, as cited in deMaynadier and Hunter 1995) correlated road use with mortality of common toads, demonstrating that 24-40 cars per hour is sufficient to kill 50% of migrating individuals. Similarly, in a study of frogs and toads, Fahrig et al. (1995) found the proportion of dead-to-live animals increased and the total density of animals decreased with increasing traffic intensity.

Several management options are available to reduce traffic mortality on established roads including culverts or underpasses, temporary road closures during major migrations, reduced speed zones, or relocating roads (Langton 1989; Yanes et al. 1995; Boarman and Sazaki 1996). For example, spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*) appear to successfully use culverts (Jackson and Tynning 1989). However, Auidewijk (1989) reported that less than 4% of a local toad population used culverts installed for their migration. Yanes et al. (1995) suggest that culvert dimensions, road width, height of drift fence, and vegetation along roadways may all influence the effectiveness of culverts. Funnels leading into culverts, lighted culverts, vegetation around culvert openings, and pitfall-trap entrances may all enhance the effectiveness of culverts. Many other suggestions for constructing effective culverts can be found in the studies reported by Langton (1989).

Off-Road Vehicle Impacts

The impacts of motorized vehicles on amphibian populations do not end at the roadside. Although far less studied, impacts from ORVs have been documented. In addition to direct mortality resulting from collisions, ORVs may disrupt habitat to the point that it becomes unusable by herpetofauna (see below). Furthermore, noise from on- and off-road vehicles is also likely to have negative indirect impacts on herpetofauna. For example, Nash et al. (1970) found that leopard frogs exposed to loud noises (120 decibels) remained immobilized for much longer periods of time than a similarly handled control group. Thus, an immobility reaction resulting from noise-induced fear could increase mortality of herpetofauna that inhabit areas used by ORVs or for herpetofauna undertaking road crossings by inhibiting their ability to find shelter or move across a roadway. Although I found no studies documenting the impacts of noise on

breeding choruses of amphibians, it is also possible that vehicle noise may not allow amphibians to properly hear and move toward breeding aggregations. This may be especially true for species such as our native Columbia spotted frog and western toad, which do not have loud calls and may not be heard from long distances or in the presence of other noises.

Chemical Contamination and Sedimentation from Roads

Soil disturbance has been directly implicated in both lethal and sublethal effects on amphibians. If not contained, road construction may cause increased sedimentation in adjoining aquatic habitats. Road construction in Redwood National Park introduced large amounts of sediments into neighboring streams and densities of tailed frogs, Pacific giant salamanders (*Dicamptodon tenebrosus*), and southern torrent salamanders (*Rhyacotriton variegatus*) were lower in these streams compared to nearby control streams (Welsh and Ollivier 1998). Similarly, Corn and Bury (1989) reported species richness and abundance to be negatively correlated with the amount of fine sediments for four species of stream amphibians in the Pacific Northwest. The impacts of sedimentation may be further heightened if the sediments contain toxic materials. Road construction in Great Smoky Mountains National Park involved using fill from the Anakeestra rock formation that when oxidized, formed a leachate with sulfuric acid, iron, zinc, manganese, and aluminum (Huckabee et al. 1975, Kucken et al. 1994). Runoff from roadsides and culverts resulted in contamination of streams within the park and 2 stream breeding salamander species were eliminated and 2 other species exhibited a 50% reduction in population size. Declines in macroinvertebrates and fish were also noted. Similarly, disturbance of, and runoff from, mine tailings increased the acidity and heavy metal concentrations in a drainage system in Colorado (Porter and Hakanson 1976). Laboratory bioassays indicated that water in the drainage was lethal for western toad larvae and required a 1000 fold dilution before tadpoles were able to survive. Sublethal effects may also result from heavy metal poisoning (e.g., Lefcort et al. 1998). Deformities in the oral cavity were observed in bullfrog tadpoles exposed to sediments high in arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, and selenium (Rowe et al. 1998), and southern toads (*Bufo terrestris*) exposed to coal combustion wastes had elevated levels of stress hormones (Hopkins et al. 1997).

Contaminant runoff from roads or campground surfaces may also affect amphibians. Maintenance of gravel road surfaces with calcium or magnesium chloride or oils in order to control airborne dust and prolong the life of the road surface may present a serious biohazard. Calcium chloride has been associated with mass mortalities of migrating salamanders apparently as a result of dessication caused by the chemical (deMaynadier and Hunter 1995). Petroleum products may also contaminate aquatic habitats next to roadways or may be directly introduced from motorized watercraft. Mahaney (1994) examined the effects of crankcase oil on tadpoles of the green treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*). Concentrations of 100 mg/L inhibited tadpole growth and prevented metamorphosis. Finally, although leaded fuels are no longer a concern Birdsall et al.'s (1986) finding that lead concentrations in frog tadpoles living in roadside ponds and ditches were correlated with daily traffic volumes in Maryland and Virginia demonstrates how contaminant levels are likely to be correlated with traffic volume.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The impacts of road and trail development, on- and off-road vehicle use, and watercraft use on Montana's amphibians should be formally studied, especially in areas of high human use.

2. Potential road and trail routes should be thoroughly surveyed for amphibians in order to identify impacts of road or trail construction and vehicle use.
3. When possible roads and trails should avoid water bodies, wetlands, and denning sites that are key habitats.
4. When new roads and trails must be constructed near water bodies or wetlands care should be taken to avoid increased sedimentation, maintain the essential hydrographic period, and allow natural processes, such as changes in river courses to continue.
5. Areas identified as key migration routes should either be closed to vehicle use during peak migration periods or culverts and underpasses should be constructed in conjunction with drift fences in order to minimize road mortality.
6. ORV use should be restricted to designated roads, trails, or pit areas.
7. Road and trail development and off-road vehicle use in areas with soils that contain mine tailings or other toxic substances should be prevented. If road and trail construction is absolutely necessary in these areas then reclamation activities should be undertaken prior to road or trail construction.

Development and Management of Water Impoundments and Recreational Facilities

Water Impoundments

The suitability of many water bodies for amphibians depends on their hydroperiod: if ponds dry up too soon, larvae desiccate, and if they are too permanent they often attract native and introduced predators that may negatively impact amphibian populations (Scott 1996; Skelly 1996). In some cases water impoundments may create breeding, foraging, and overwintering habitat for amphibians or lengthen the hydroperiod of water bodies in areas that were previously inhospitable (e.g., Cooper et al. 1998). However, in a number of instances, their development can result in the loss of these key habitats. Replacement of ephemeral wetlands or water bodies with small water impoundments often attracts native predators and provides habitat suitable for introduced fish or bullfrogs that may predate and subsequently extirpate amphibians (Scott 1996). Construction of larger impoundments can have a variety of negative impacts. For example, construction of the Jordanelle Reservoir on the Provo River in Utah flooded a large amount of habitat used by Columbia spotted frogs, a species that is threatened in the region (Wilkinson 1996a). Water impoundments can also cause downstream riverine habitats to deteriorate as a result of changes in flow regimes. Lind et al. (1996) found that reduced water flows below dams on the Trinity River in California resulted in the loss of flood plain breeding pools and vegetational overgrowth of riparian areas used for basking and foraging by amphibians. Furthermore, manipulation of water levels in water impoundments can result in direct and indirect mortality of amphibian larvae and eggs. For example, during the summer of 1998, fluctuating water levels in Cabinet Gorge Reservoir in northwest Montana led to the dessication of Columbia spotted frog eggs and larvae when water levels dropped for power generation (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Fluctuations in water levels may also cause a decline in water temperatures as a result of increased water movement. Colder water temperatures may increase mortality by decreasing larval growth rates and increasing the length of the larval life history stage (Wilbur 1980). Colder water temperatures can also result in a decreased immune response, leaving amphibian larvae more susceptible to pathogens (Nyman 1986; Carey 1993; Maniero and Carey 1997). Some factors associated with water level fluctuations may interact in a complex manner resulting in amphibian mortality. For example, Worthylake and Hovingh (1989) describe periodic mass mortality of tiger salamanders caused by interactions between fluctuating water levels, high numbers of sheep, and high levels of a pathogenic bacteria (*Acinetobacter* spp.). High numbers of sheep increased the nitrogen input into the lake and, combined with low water levels, resulted in high nitrogen concentrations that were conducive to the pathogen. Kiesecker and Blaustein (1997b) describe another complex interaction. Western toads apparently lay their eggs in one particular portion of an Oregon lake, regardless of the water levels. Low water levels resulted in mass mortality of toad eggs due to the synergistic effect of UV-B radiation and the pathogenic fungus *Saprolegnia*. Moving eggs to deeper waters significantly reduced egg mortality.

Some water impoundments are managed exclusively for waterfowl production. Because many waterfowl and wading birds feed on amphibians and reptiles (Duellman and Trueb 1986), concentrated numbers of waterfowl may lead to increased depredation. Furthermore, high concentrations of migratory waterfowl have been associated with decreased water quality (Manny et al. 1994; Post et al. 1998) and habitat degradation (Kerbes et al. 1990; Ankney 1996). For example, Post et al. (1998) estimated that waterfowl increased nitrogen and phosphorus

levels by 40% and 75%, respectively, on Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in the winter of 1995-1996 and Kerbes et al. (1990) reported that high concentrations of snow geese (*Chen caerulescens*) have lead to destruction of wetland vegetation.

Finally, declines in amphibian populations resulting from water impoundments would also be expected to lead to declines in predators that depend on amphibians as prey (Kupferberg 1994; Koch et al. 1996).

Recreational Facilities

Several aspects of recreational facilities and associated activities may negatively impact amphibians. Amphibian populations in or near recreational facilities are at risk of increased mortality as a result of handling and killing by humans (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Furthermore, amphibians may become stressed by human handling (e.g., Reinking et al. 1980) and, if translocated to unfamiliar microhabitats, may not be able to find local refugia from predators, or water to rehydrate themselves. Amphibian populations in or near recreational facilities may also face increased mortality as a result of handling and killing by human pets (e.g., Coman and Brunner 1972). In the United States there may be more than 120 million dogs and cats, with as many as 50 million of these being homeless (Denney 1974). In addition, wild predators, including ravens (*Corvus corax*), striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), and foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) may be supported at artificially high numbers around areas of human activity due to the availability of human refuse and a lack of larger predators. Olson (1989) found that ravens at a recreational facility depredated more than 20% of a breeding aggregation of western toads in the Oregon Cascades. Schaaf and Garton (1970) found that raccoons ate at least 50 individuals of a breeding chorus of American toads (*Bufo americanus*). Similarly, Parker et al. (2000) concluded that predator control programs may be necessary to ensure the survival of the federally endangered Wyoming toad (*Bufo baxteri*) after at least 20% of the adult population was depredated in a single event by an unidentified mustelid.

Finally, a number of amphibians breed and forage nocturnally and it is possible that artificial lighting at recreational facilities may negatively impact these activities. For example, large choruses of breeding Pacific treefrogs in western Montana can be rapidly and completely quieted by shining a flashlight across a breeding pond, and calling may not be reinitiated for up to 5 minutes (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). If breeding ponds are subject to constant illumination by a fixed light or repeated exposure to car lights near a recreational facility it is possible that breeding success may be negatively impacted. Similarly, nocturnal foraging behavior of amphibians and reptiles may be impacted by the presence of artificial lights, especially when species depend on extremely dark conditions (e.g., Hailman 1982). Buchanan (1993) found that the ability of nocturnally foraging grey treefrogs (*Hyla versicolor*) to detect and subsequently consume prey was significantly reduced when artificial light sources were present as compared to ambient-light conditions.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The impact of recreational facilities, water impoundments, and associated human activities on amphibian populations should be formally investigated.
2. Current and potential sites for recreational facilities and water impoundments should be thoroughly surveyed for amphibians to identify potential impacts of these facilities.

3. New recreational facilities should not be located within 300 meters of key breeding, foraging, or overwintering habitats.
4. When past or future water impoundments have eliminated key breeding, foraging, and overwintering habitats, impacts on amphibians should be mitigated by the creation of adjacent water bodies that have deeper areas for overwintering and areas with shallow waters for larval rearing. Furthermore, fish should not be introduced to these water bodies and fluctuations in water levels at these sites should not be correlated with fluctuations in water levels in the adjacent water impoundment.
5. Downstream flows from water impoundments should mimic natural flow regimes in order to maintain flood plain breeding and foraging habitats.
6. Management of habitats exclusively for waterfowl production should be avoided. A multispecies or community approach is preferable.
7. Recreational facilities located near documented amphibian populations should contain educational signs or pamphlets pertaining to the amphibians in the area and how they may be impacted by humans and their pets.
8. If domestic or wild predators are found in high densities in areas with key breeding habitat, predator control programs may be required in order to ensure that native amphibian populations persist.
9. The subsidization of native predators should be minimized by maintaining fully enclosed waste facilities.

Harvest and Commerce

The worldwide collection and harvest of amphibians for food, sport, and commerce as pets, skins, art, souvenirs, and medicinal products is extensive. Hundreds of millions of amphibians are removed from the wild and/or killed each year for these activities and annual worldwide commerce in amphibians may be valued in the hundreds of millions, possibly even billions, of dollars annually (Scott and Siegel 1992; Wilkinson 1996*b*; Buck 1997; Pough et al. 1998). For example, each year the United States imports 1,000 to 2,000 tons of frog legs for human consumption; France imports around 3.4 million tons (Stebbins and Cohen 1995). As another example, the fishing bait industry's use of salamander larvae may be quite extensive with 2.5 million salamander larvae being sold as bait on the lower Colorado River area in 1968 alone (Collins 1981). Finally, pet shops across Montana sell a large number of amphibians annually, including bullfrogs (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Unfortunately, we currently do not know the degree to which Montana's amphibians are collected or harvested for biological or commercial purposes. Furthermore, we do not know the extent of the impacts of selling exotic and native amphibians in pet stores. In addition to the possible introduction of exotic predators such as bullfrogs, sales of exotic species from overseas may act as a vector for diseases such as the chytrid fungus which has populations of amphibians to decline or go extinct around the world (Burger et al. 1998; Daszak et al. 1999). Sales of nonindigenous native species can also result in hybridization and genetic introgression with native populations, possibly leading to the elimination of distinct life histories and genetic makeups (Collins 1981). Unfortunately, the state of Montana currently does not have any permit requirements or regulations for the collection, harvest, or possession of wild native amphibians (Levell 1995; MCA 87-5). Thus, biologists and commercial collectors from across the country can collect unlimited numbers of Montana's native amphibians without a collecting permit.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The degree to which amphibians are harvested and sold in Montana and the impacts of harvesting and selling amphibians should be formally studied.
2. Collecting or harvesting of all amphibians should be regulated and/or monitored by requiring permits to undertake these activities.
3. Because animals sold in pet stores can act as vectors for pathogens they should be examined and formally certified as free of pathogens such as the chytrid fungus which seems to be responsible for amphibian population declines around the world and in the western United States.
4. Collecting or harvesting rare species, such as the Coeur d' Alene salamander, plains spadefoot, western toad, Great Plains toad, and Canadian toad should be regulated by requiring permits in order to prevent declines in these species.
5. A public education program should be undertaken in order to encourage people to enjoy and value native amphibians in the wild.

Habitat Fragmentation and Metapopulation Impacts

Many of the factors described above may result in the loss of amphibian habitat and the subsequent loss of local populations (e.g., Bury et al. 1980; Rosen et al. 1995; Knapp 1996; Lind et al. 1996; Beebee 1997). However, loss of individual local populations may also influence the persistence of regional populations or metapopulations, even when the total amount of habitat remains constant (e.g., Hanski and Gilpin 1991; Robinson et al. 1992; Simberloff 1993; Fahrig and Merriam 1994). For example, Rosen et al. (1995) found that extirpation of native amphibians in Arizona resulting from the introduction of nonindigenous bullfrogs and fishes into permanent water bodies led to the extirpation of native amphibians from nearby regions when smaller water bodies the natives had been exiled to dried up during a drought. Thus, loss of core habitats that support local source populations can lead to more widespread extirpations. Core habitats for Montana's amphibians are described in the table at the end of the document.

Habitat patch size, shape, isolation, and quality all influence the persistence of regional metapopulations. The size of habitat patches is often associated with the probability that a patch is occupied by amphibian species (e.g., Laan and Verboom 1990; Marsh and Pearman 1997; Fahrig 1998). Patch distribution across a landscape may also greatly influence whether a patch is occupied or not. The degree of patch isolation is often negatively associated with patch occupancy (Sjögren 1991; Vos and Stumpel 1995; Sjögren-Gulve and Ray 1996). Even manipulating the matrix habitat in between habitat patches can influence patch occupancy. For example, Sjögren-Gulve and Ray (1996) found that ditches meant to drain forest areas between frog ponds effectively isolated them even though the distance between ponds had not been altered.

Another complication is that different species respond to patchy landscapes in different ways. For example, Semlitsch (1998) found that six species of *Ambystoma* salamanders varied in their dispersal and use of habitat surrounding ponds. Some species dispersed and used terrestrial habitat up to 250 meters from the pond edge, suggesting that managers need to seriously consider providing extensive buffer zones surrounding water bodies and wetlands. Although knowledge of maximum dispersal and migration distances represents one of the most important pieces of information required to ensure the viability of amphibian metapopulations this information is currently lacking for the majority of Montana's amphibian species. Finally, species may also differ with respect to their response to habitat edges. For instance, demaynadier and Hunter (1998) found that while salamanders, frogs, and toads were all negatively effected by forest edges, salamanders were much more sensitive to abrupt forest edges than frogs and toads.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The effects of habitat fragmentation should be formally investigated for all amphibian species in Montana. Specifically, the degree to which each species tolerates habitat fragmentation should be identified.
2. Loss or deterioration of overwintering, breeding, foraging, or migration habitats used by various amphibian species should be avoided.

3. When loss or deterioration of overwintering, breeding, foraging, or migration habitat is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be addressed in order to ensure that regional populations are maintained.
4. Radio telemetry studies should be conducted in order to identify common and maximum dispersal and migration distances for all of Montana's amphibian species.
5. Studies should document the demographic vital rates and/or population dynamics of individual populations and metapopulations in order to understand how the dynamics of individual populations and metapopulations are linked to landscape attributes, including elevation, distance between habitat patches, number of habitat patches in a given area, and the physical qualities of individual habitat patches and the matrix habitat between habitat patches.

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INTRODUCTION TO SPECIES ACCOUNTS

The following species accounts compile information on each species' distribution, conservation status, and biology across the species' range with a focus on Montana. These accounts are intended to be updated on a regular basis in order to provide everyone access to the latest information. Each species account contains the following sections:

Dot Distribution and Range Maps

Each map contains all point observation records that are currently in the Point Observation Database (POD) at the Montana Natural Heritage Program represented as black dots. Each map also shows shading which estimates the potential maximum limits of the species' range in the state based on general habitat types, major topographic features, and climate regimes. Dots and shading are overlayed on maps showing county boundaries, shaded relief, and major hydrographic features. The latest up-to-date distribution information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>

Distribution/Taxonomy

This section briefly describes what is known about the latitudinal, longitudinal, and elevational limits of the species overall range as well as those limits in Montana. The section also summarizes information on the number of subspecies that are currently recognized, which subspecies are present in Montana, and ongoing debates regarding taxonomy.

Maximum Elevation

This section identifies the maximum documented elevation for the species in Montana in both meters and feet, identifies the county in which the record was documented, and lists the source of this information.

Identification

This section discusses the key identifying morphological features of eggs, larvae, neonates, juveniles, and adults of the species as well identifying other species which might have similar morphological features.

Habitat Use/Natural History

This section reviews literature on the general natural history and habitat use of the species for breeding, foraging, and overwintering. In general this section tries to identify habitats the species depends on during each part of its life history as well the size of the species' seasonal or overall home range and maximum documented migration or dispersal distance. Other note worthy natural history information is also included.

Status and Conservation

This section summarizes what is known about the species' general conservation status throughout its range and in Montana. It also reviews scientific literature on specific anthropogenic impacts that have been studied for the species.

Research and Management Suggestions

This section provides a list of priority research and management issues for each species in Montana in order to provide for the conservation of the species in the state.

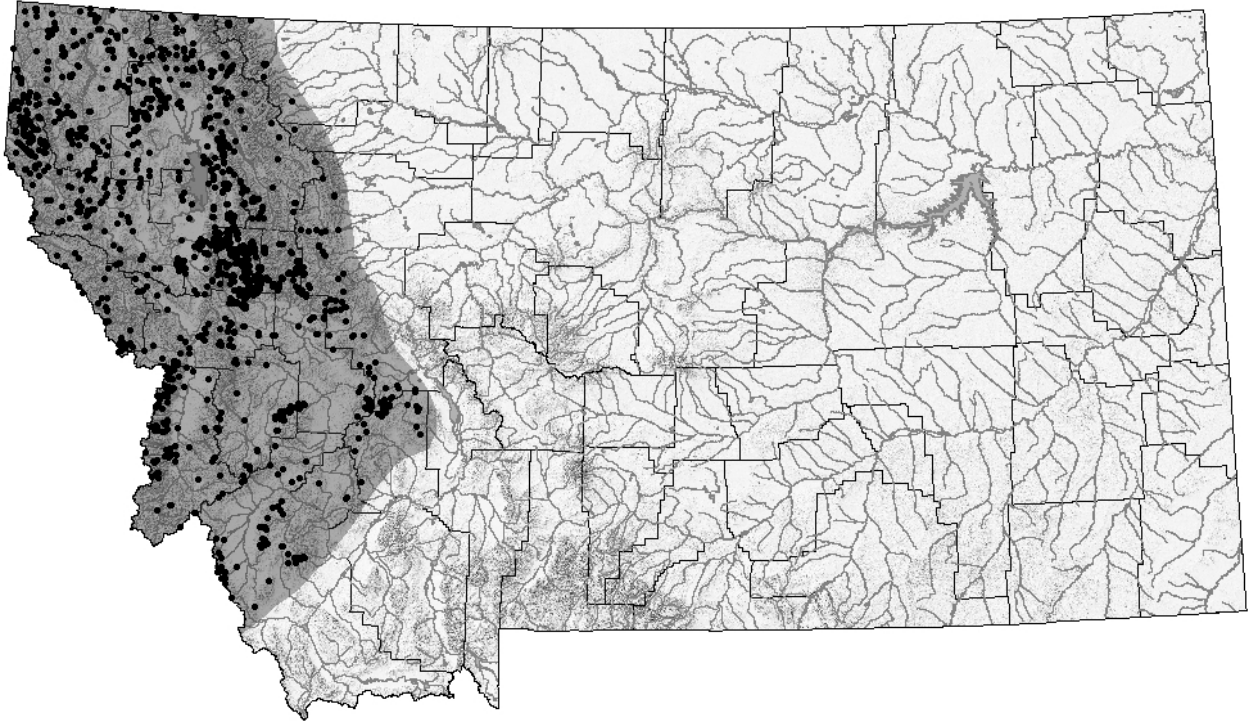
Bibliography

An attempt was made to compile a complete bibliography of published and gray literature for each species in order to provide everyone easy access to this information. All article citations are in alphabetical order, but articles that contain information specific to Montana are prefaced by an asterisk, *.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS FOR SPECIES DOCUMENTED IN MONTANA

Long-toed Salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Five subspecies are recognized and range from central California through the Pacific Northwest to southeast Alaska at elevations up to or above 2,700 M (8,859 ft) (Ferguson 1961; Petranka 1998). Only a single subspecies, the northern long-toed salamander (*A. m. krausei*), occurs in Montana. Their known range in Montana extends west of the Rocky Mountain Front and the Missouri, Jefferson, and Beaverhead Rivers.

Maximum Elevation

2,774 m (9,100 ft) Keif Storrar – Lake, 1.5 miles W of Homer Youngs Peak, Beaverhead County (Zone 12, 287796E, 5020869N). 18 August 2003. (Werner et al. 2004).

Identification

Eggs:

Laid in clusters of 9-81 ($X = 23$, $SD = 14.5$, $N = 36$ across 5 sites in northwest Montana). Each ovum is black or brown above, white to gray below, and surrounded by two jelly layers. Ovum diameters are approximately 2.5 mm, but total egg diameters, including the two jelly layers, are usually 12-17 mm (Slater 1936).

Larvae:

Translucent, light tan, or black dorsally and laterally with black and gold flecks. White to pinkish ventrally. Three pairs of external feathery gills emanate from the sides of the head with

9-13 gill rakers on their anterior surface (Russell and Bauer 2000). Snout to vent length (SVL) of 10-60 mm.

Juveniles and Adults:

Fourth toe on the hind foot is elongate and longer than the sole of the foot. Incomplete or fully formed yellow, orangish, or reddish dorsal stripe may extend from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. Eyelids are the same color as the dorsal stripe. White flecking present on the lateral and ventral surfaces over a black lateral and pink ventral base color. 12-13 costal grooves are present. SVL of 25-80 mm (Russell et al. 1996).

Similar Species:

Adult Coeur d'Alene salamanders have nasolabial grooves and their toes are webbed and shorter than the soles of their feet. See sections on habitat use for differences in habitat used by long-toed and Coeur d'Alene salamanders. Tiger salamander eggs have 3 jelly layers and have total diameters less than 10 mm, including the jelly layers. Larval tiger salamanders have larger heads are usually olive green to silvery white in base color and have 15-25 gill rakers on the anterior surface of their gills (Russell and Bauer 2000). See sections on distribution for geographic areas of possible overlap for long-toed and tiger salamanders.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Adults are found in a wide variety of habitats including semiarid sagebrush, alpine meadows, dry woodlands, humid forests, rocky shores of mountain lakes and disturbed agricultural areas (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Outside of the breeding season adults are primarily subterranean and have been documented to commonly move at least 600 meters from the nearest breeding site on the University of Montana's Lubrecht Experimental Forest (Jennifer Pierson, Wildlife Biology Program, University of Montana, pers. comm.). Breeding takes place in temporary or permanent ponds or in quiet water at the edge of lakes and streams. During the breeding season adults may be found in shallow waters or under logs, rocks, and other debris near water. Although individual animals tend to use the same migration routes, no preference in habitat, relative soil moisture or vegetation is evident for the species' movements to and from breeding pools (Beneski et al. 1986). Eggs are attached to vegetation or loose on the bottom at depths up to 0.8 meters. Larvae usually transform at the end of their first summer at low elevations or at the end of their second, third or fourth summer at high elevations and in cold waters at lower elevations (Howard and Wallace 1985, Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Larvae and adults feed on a variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates and larvae feed on other amphibian larvae including conspecifics (Farner 1947; Anderson 1968; Walls et al. 1993, Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Status and Conservation

Long-toed salamanders are the most widely distributed and common amphibian species west of the Continental Divide with larvae being found in most fishless standing waterbodies with adjacent soils that provide suitable terrestrial habitat (i.e., sites that are not surrounded by extensive areas of bare rock). Their status in the front ranges east of the Continental Divide is uncertain. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include all the general risk factors described above with the exception of harvest and commerce. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of long-toed salamanders include the following. (1) A number of studies have found adverse impacts of introduced fish on long-toed salamanders. Funk and Dunlap (1999)

found that trout effectively excluded salamander populations from lakes in the Bitterroot Mountains. However, when fish went extinct in lakes that did not have spawning habitat salamanders were able to recolonize some of them over a twenty year time period. In the Palouse region of northern Idaho Monello and Wright (1999) found the presence of long-toed salamanders to be highly negatively correlated with the presence of a variety of fish species, including largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and goldfish. Tyler et al. (1998a) found a similar pattern in North Cascades National Park and found that nitrogen levels were positively correlated with salamander densities in fishless lakes, apparently an indication of bottom up limitations on the food web. Similarly, long-toed salamanders in the central and northern portion of the Sierra Nevada Mountains are largely restricted to fishless lakes (Bradford and Gordon 1992 as cited in Knapp 1996). Tyler et al. (1998b) found that when rainbow trout were stocked in experimental ponds with long-toed salamanders, larval survivorship was lower and larval body lengths were smaller than in control ponds without fish, supporting the theory that introduced trout not only impact salamanders through direct predation, but also indirectly by increasing refuge use and, thereby, reducing foraging time. (2) In a study of the long-toed salamander in Douglas-fir forests in the Swan River Valley McGraw (1997) found that areas where overstory removal (250-300 trees harvested per hectare) and new forestry (leave 13-25 dominant tree species per hectare and retain all snags and hardwoods) harvest techniques were applied had less ground cover, higher soil temperatures, and 75% fewer terrestrial salamanders than control plots. Interestingly, he also found that larvae were more abundant in ponds where a fraction of the pond margin was harvested than either ponds whose margins were completely harvested or ponds whose forest margins were completely intact. (3) Tallmon et al. (2000) found that gene flow among populations in the Bitterroot Mountains is greater between populations on the same mountain ridge than between populations on adjacent mountain ridges, indicating that drainages between ridges act as more of a barrier to dispersal than the steep terrain on the ridge itself. The dominance of terrestrial dispersal is also supported by the genetic analyses of Howard and Wallace (1981). (4) Fukumoto and Herrero (1998) documented mortality of a minimum of 1-2% of the adult breeding population as they crossed a roadway to the breeding site in Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta. However, the authors suggest that actual mortality may have been considerably higher, contributing to the unusual 3:1 female biased sex ratio observed at the breeding site. (5) Blaustein et al. (1994) found that the species has low levels of photolyase, an enzyme that repairs UV-B radiation damage to DNA. Blaustein et al. (1997) subsequently found that only 14.5% of embryos exposed to 94% of ambient UV-B radiation survived to hatching as compared to 95% survival for larvae exposed to only 10% of ambient UV-B radiation. Together these findings suggest that enhanced UV-B radiation from thinning of the ozone layer may be impacting salamander populations now or will impact them at some time in the future. (6) Sessions and Ruth (1990) found that cysts of a trematode parasite apparently caused limb deformities at the site of the cyst. This parasite has now been found in larvae collected in Montana (Pieter Johnson, Claremont McKenna College, pers. comm.). (7) The extent of the use of larval long-toed salamanders as fishing bait is unknown in Montana, however the species is known to be used in large numbers in other states (Collins 1981) so this practice does have the potential to impact populations in Montana. Accidental introduction of larvae being used for bait may result in hybridization and genetic introgression, possibly leading to the elimination of distinct genetic makeups (Collins 1981). (8) Bradford et al. (1994) found that the LC₅₀ pH for Pacific treefrog embryos and hatchlings exposed for 7 days averaged 4.3 and that pH levels greater than or equal to 5.0 had no significant lethal or sublethal effects.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of harvest and commerce.
2. Additional information is needed on their distribution east of the Continental Divide, especially in southwest Montana. Documentation of their presence along the upper Clark Fork River and in the Pioneer and Beaverhead Mountain Ranges is poor and their presence in the southern Boulder Mountains and the Highland and Tendoy Mountains is uncertain.
3. Local and landscape wide impacts of fish introductions should be examined in order to develop fish stocking guidelines that will allow for the persistence of individual populations and connectivity between sets of local populations or metapopulations.
4. Fish stocking at both high and low elevation sites should only be carried out where fish have previously been stocked and in areas where they are contained in a limited number of water bodies (i.e., introduction in one lake in a basin will not result in the colonization of other lakes in the basin).
5. Fish removal should be considered in areas that appear to be key habitats that ensure the survival of local sets of populations.
6. The practice of using salamander larvae as fishing bait should be banned in order to protect the genetic makeup of native populations.

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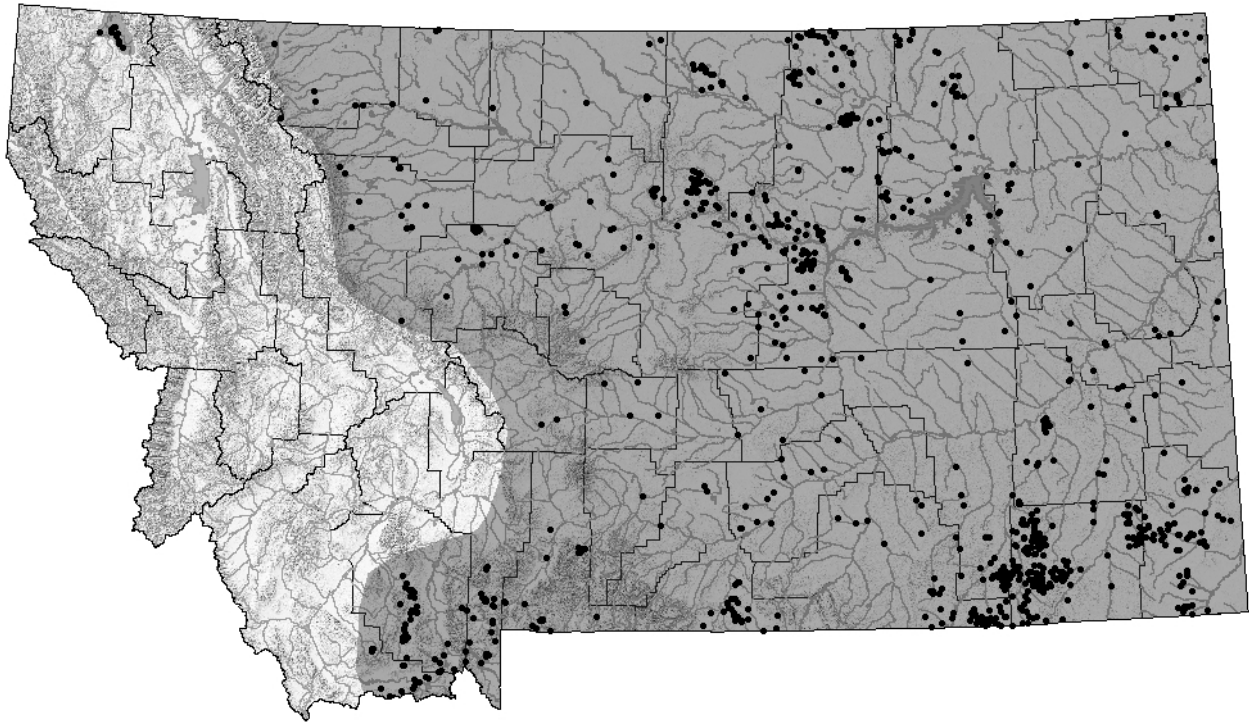
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Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The systematics of the tiger salamander species complex are under debate, but most authorities recognize 7 varieties which range from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Basin and Columbia Plateau and from central Mexico to central Canada at elevations up to 3,350 M (11,000 ft) (Gehlbach 1967; Shaffer and McKnight 1996; Irschick and Shaffer 1997; Petranka 1998). Although the edge of the range of the gray tiger salamander, *Ambystoma t. diaboli*, approaches the northeastern corner of Montana, only a single subspecies, the blotched tiger salamander, *Ambystoma t. melanostictum*, is currently known to occur in the state. In Montana they are known to range across the prairies and, in some places, into the mountains to the east of the Continental Divide. In addition, *A. tigrinum* have recently been documented at a number of sites in the Tobacco Valley of northwestern Montana (Werner and Reichel 1996). It is not known whether this is a naturally occurring disjunct population, or whether their presence is the result of human introduction.

Maximum Elevation

2,769 m (9,085 ft) just north of Coffin Mountain in southern Gallatin County (Dave Deavours; MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Eggs:

Laid singly or in small linear clusters. Each ovum is black or brown above, light gray below, and surrounded by three jelly layers (Micken 1968). Ovum diameters are 2-3 mm, but total egg diameters, including the three jelly layers, are 7-9 mm (Micken 1968; Tanner 1971; Kaplan

1980).

Larvae:

Color is variable, but usually olive green dorsally and silvery white ventrally. Three pairs of external feathery gills emanate from the sides of the head with 15-25 gill rakers on their anterior surface (Russell and Bauer 2000). SVL of 5-98 mm. (Kaplan 1980; Hill 1995).

Juveniles and Adults:

Color is variable. Commonly mottled dorsally with green, yellow, or tan patches on a brown or black background, but some may be uniformly dark in color (Koch and Peterson 1995). Venter gray. 12-13 costal grooves are present. SVL of 70-90 mm (Russell and Bauer 2000).

Similar Species:

Long-toed salamander eggs have 2 jelly layers and have diameters greater than 10 mm, including the jelly layers. Larval long-toed salamanders have smaller heads and are translucent, light tan, or black dorsally and laterally with black and gold flecks. In addition, larval long-toed salamanders are white to pinkish ventrally and have 9-13 gill rakers on the anterior surface of their gills. See sections on distribution for geographic areas of possible overlap for tiger and long-toed salamanders.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Adults are found in virtually any habitat, providing there is a terrestrial substrate suitable for burrowing and a body of water nearby suitable for breeding. Terrestrial adults usually remain underground, in self-made burrows or in those made by rodents or other animals (Koch and Peterson 1995; Madison and Farrand 1998). Breeding takes place soon after snow melt at sites ranging from clear mountain ponds to temporary, manure-polluted pools in the lowlands. Breeding sites almost always lack predatory fishes (Micken 1971; USFWS 1964-1982; Baxter and Stone 1985; Hill 1995). Adults may migrate several hundred meters between terrestrial burrows and breeding habitats (Koch and Peterson 1995). Migrations usually occur nocturnally around the time of precipitation events when minimum daily temperatures are greater than zero degrees celsius (Hill 1995). Eggs are attached to submerged objects at shallower depths. Larvae may transform at the end of their first summer if the growing season is long enough, but may remain larvae for a second or third summer at high elevations in cold waters (Micken 1968; Hill 1995). Metamorphosed adults may spend extensive periods of time feeding in ponds after breeding. Stays of up to 159 days have been documented in Montana (Hill 1995). In some instances larvae may become sexually mature (paedogenesis) and reproduce without transforming (Micken 1968; Hill 1995). In the water larvae and adults feed on a variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates and some larvae and pedomorphic adults feed on other amphibian larvae including conspecifics (Dodson and Dodson 1971; Pfenning et al. 1991). On land terrestrial adults may feed on a variety of invertebrates or even small mammals (Moore and Strickland 1955; Petranksa 1998).

Status and Conservation

Tiger salamanders are widely distributed and common on the prairies east of the main Rocky Mountain chain with larvae being found in the majority of fishless ponds with adjacent soils that have not been plowed or otherwise heavily modified. However, their status in the mountains and

mountain valleys east of the Continental Divide is largely uncertain. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include grazing, nonindigenous species and their management, road and trail development and on- and off-road vehicle use, development of water impoundments, and habitat fragmentation, all as described above. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of tiger salamanders include the following. (1) A number of studies in the western United States over the past five decades have documented the almost complete exclusion of tiger salamanders from waters where predatory fish have been introduced (Blair 1951; Carpenter 1953; Levi and Levi 1955; USFWS 1964-1982; Collins et al. 1988; Geraghty 1992; Corn et al. 1997). Furthermore, at least two studies have documented multiple extinction and recolonization events by tiger salamanders as a result of the introduction, subsequent natural and human caused extinction, and subsequent reintroduction of trout in lakes in Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain National Parks (USFWS 1964-1982; Corn et al. 1997). Even larger larvae, or reproductively mature adults that fish are unable to prey on because of gape limitations are likely to be negatively impacted as a result of fish stocking because the diets of fish and salamanders largely overlap one another (Olenick and Gee 1981). (2) Hamilton (1941) reports that the piscicide rotenone has an LC_{50} value (i.e., causes 50% mortality) for metamorphosing tiger salamander larvae when 5% rotenone is applied at 0.1 mg/L for 24 hours. (3) The use of larval tiger salamanders as bait for sport fishing may have major impacts on tiger salamander populations and the entire aquatic community at both the site of collection and introduction because of their status as a top level predator in many aquatic communities (Holomuzki and Collins 1987; Holomuzki et al. 1994). Furthermore, introduction can result in hybridization and genetic introgression with native populations, possibly leading to the elimination of distinct life histories and genetic makeups (Collins 1981; Collins et al. 1988). The bait industry's use of salamander larvae may be quite extensive. For example, the average number and wholesale value of tiger salamander larvae in South Dakota wetlands was estimated at 35,625 and \$1,614 per hectare, respectively, in 1989 (Carlson and Berry 1990) and Collins (1981) notes that in 1968 2.5 million salamander larvae were sold as bait on the lower Colorado River area alone. (4) Mass mortalities of tiger salamanders have been observed in agricultural landscapes in eastern Montana (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Worthylake and Hovingh (1989) documented the recurring mass mortality of tiger salamanders in lakes contaminated with nitrogen from atmospheric pollution and the feces of sheep. The lakes were previously nitrogen limited and increased nitrogen levels allowed bacterial counts to increase in the summer leading to the mass mortality events. Pfenning et al. (1991) propose that contamination of waters through livestock defecation may alter life histories of tiger salamanders by limiting the number of cannibal morphs. Cannibal morphs may be more likely to spread pathogens as a result of eating infected conspecifics. Eutrophication of waters through fecal contamination may also cause planorbis snail numbers to rise, thereby increasing the number of nematode parasites and the rate of parasite infection that can subsequently lead to limb deformities (Bishop and Hamilton 1947; Johnson 1999). Finally, although they have not been linked to water quality, a number of recent mass mortality events have been caused by an iridovirus in the genus, *Ranavirus* (e.g., Bollinger et al. 1999). (5) Disturbance of terrestrial habitats by plowing and deep raking has been identified as a serious threat to a closely related species, the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) which has recently been emergency listed as a federally endangered species (Herpetological Review 31(2):68). (6) Lefcort et al. (1997) found that waters contaminated with motor oil and silt resulted in decreased growth and survival rates of tiger salamander larvae as well as decreasing their ability to detect predators. (7) Kiesecker

(1996) and Whiteman et al. (1995) documented reduced growth rates, survival rates, predatory success rates, in waters with lower pH (< pH 5.0). Harte and Hoffman (1989) hypothesized that acid precipitation, in the form of an acidic pulse during snow melt, had killed salamander embryos and caused a decline of a population of tiger salamanders in central Colorado from 1982 to 1987. However, this population has now apparently recovered (Wissinger and Whiteman 1992), and there is little evidence that either chronic or episodic acidification occurs in this area at levels sufficient to directly kill embryos (Corn and Vertucci 1992; Vertucci and Corn 1994; Vertucci and Corn 1996). However, lower pH levels resulting from acidification could act synergistically with pathogens or other contaminants to cause population declines as a result of reduced function of their immune systems (Carey et al. 1999).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of timber harvest, fire and fire management activities, and harvest and commerce.
2. The causes of mass mortality events in eastern Montana should be investigated to ensure that appropriate conservation measures are taken.
3. At the present time it is unknown whether or not they inhabit much of the region between Great Falls and the Idaho border south of Dillon.
4. Systematists should be contacted regarding the genetic makeup of the isolated population in the Tobacco Valley near Eureka. If their presence in this region is the result of human introduction, control efforts may be required in order to protect local long-toed salamander populations from this superior predator/competitor. If they are a truly disjunct population, some conservation efforts may be justified in order to ensure their persistence.
5. Local and landscape wide impacts of fish introductions should be examined in order to develop fish stocking guidelines that will allow for the persistence of individual populations and connectivity between sets of local populations or metapopulations.
6. Fish stocking at both high and low elevation sites should only be carried out where fish have previously been stocked and in areas where they are contained in a limited number of water bodies (i.e., introduction in one lake will not result in the colonization of other nearby lakes).
7. Fish removal should be considered in areas that appear to be key habitats that ensure the survival of local sets of populations.
8. Piscicide use in waters known to contain tiger salamanders should be limited to the late fall after most of the year's metamorphosis has taken place and adults have migrated to terrestrial overwintering sites.
9. The practice of using tiger salamander larvae as fishing bait should be banned in order to protect the genetic makeup of native tiger salamander populations they may interbreed with or other native communities they may alter as a top aquatic predator.
10. The extent and impact of agricultural runoff and contaminants from roads should be investigated in order to identify the effects on larvae or aquatic adults, especially in areas where mass mortality events have been observed.
11. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.

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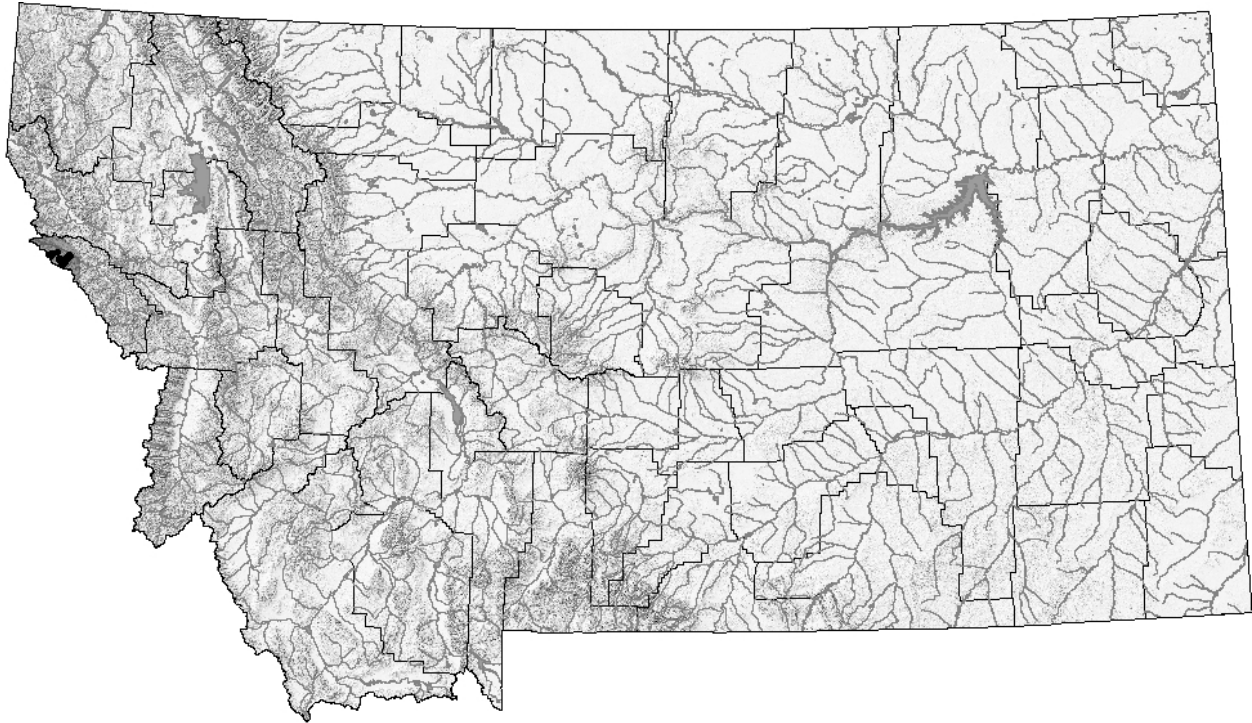
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Idaho Giant Salamander (*Dicamptodon aterrimus*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

In 2005, Idaho Giant Salamander (*Dicamptodon aterrimus*) were confirmed to be present in Mineral County south of Haugan by Jennifer Copenhaver of the Lolo National Forest. Electrofishing surveys in the same region in 2006 and 2007 detected more than 100 individuals in 51 different portions of 11 different tributaries of 3 major watersheds. Prior to these observations, the species had been reported or illustrated as occurring in Mineral and Ravalli counties by a number of authors (Anderson 1969; Black 1970a; Daugherty et al. 1983; Stebbins 2003; Good 1989; Reichel and Flath 1995; Petranka 1998). However, as noted by Nussbaum (1976) and Savage (1952) all these distributional claims were apparently based on the assumption that the holotype specimen (USNM 5242) described by Cope (1867) and later by Cope (1889) as being collected by Lieutenant Mullan from the "North Rocky Mountains" was actually collected in western Montana. Thus, prior to the detection in 2005 there was no valid documentation of their presence in the state (Franz 1971; Nussbaum 1976; Maxell et al. 2003; Werner et al. 2004).

Maximum Elevation

1,737 m (5,700 ft) in Mineral County (Eric Dallalio and Phil Jellen, pers. comm.; MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are laid singly, but placed together in a mass approximately 15 cm wide by 20 cm long containing 129 to 200 eggs (Nussbaum et al. 1983; Jones et al. 1990). Each ovum is pure white and is surrounded by six clear jelly layers (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Ovum diameters are

approximately 6.5 mm (Nussbaum et al. 1983). The eggs are oblong with the long axis attached to the substrate. Total egg widths are 16-21 mm and total egg heights are 22-33 mm, including the jelly layers (Jones et al. 1990).

Larvae:

Short external feathery gills are present at the base of the head. Body color varies to match the local substrate, but they usually have a dark dorsal color with lighter stripes behind the eyes (Nussbaum et al. 1983). The dorsal tail fin is mottled. Hatchlings have a TL of 34 to 40 mm and reproductively mature larvae (neotenic) larvae may reach a TL of 351 mm (Nussbaum et al. 1983; Jones et al. 1990).

Juveniles and Adults:

Dorsal color is dark brown or almost black in base color and light tan or coppery marbling is usually present and is often brightest on the head (Nussbaum et al. 1983). The size of new metamorphs is highly variable but adults may reach a TL of up to 340 mm (Nussbaum et al. 1983).

Similar Species:

No other salamander would be found as an aquatic inhabitant of streams in Montana and terrestrial adults of long-toed and tiger salamanders are much smaller (see descriptions).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Although seldom seen, adults are found terrestrially in moist coniferous forests under rocks, bark and logs and aquatically under stones in mountain streams or lakes up to 2,165 M (7,100 ft) (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Adults are active terrestrially on warm, rainy nights and may feed on a variety of invertebrates and small vertebrates (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Adults breed in the spring or fall in hidden water-filled nest chambers beneath logs and stones or in crevices in mountain streams or lakes. Females subsequently deposit eggs in these chambers and guard the eggs throughout the incubation period (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Larvae and aquatic adults are the most likely life history stage to be observed as they may reach high densities in the pools of swift, cold mountain streams and they may also be found in lakes or ponds (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Larvae feed on fish and invertebrates and usually metamorphose in 18-24 months, but may become sexually mature (paedogenesis) and reproduce as larvae (Nussbaum et al. 1983; Parker 1993).

Status and Conservation

Because Idaho Giant Salamanders were only recently detected in Montana the extent of their distribution and conservation status is still largely uncertain. However, because their distribution appears to be limited to a handful of headwater streams adjacent to the Idaho border, they face a variety of risks associated with limited distribution. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include, timber harvest, fire and fire management activities, use of piscicides, road and trail development, on- and off-road vehicle use, and habitat fragmentation, all as described above. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of Idaho Giant Salamanders have not been reviewed at this time.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Because the species' known range in Montana appears to be extremely limited, special management attention should be given to watersheds where the species has been detected and surveys should be conducted prior to the initiation of projects close to headwater streams in the area along the Idaho border between Thompson Falls and Lolo Pass.
2. The impacts of tree canopy removal on egg, larval, and adult survival should be examined in order to understand the implications of timber harvest and fire management activities.
3. The impacts of road and trail development on egg, larval, and adult survival should be examined, specifically with regards to impacts resulting from increased sedimentation.
4. The phylogeography of Montana populations should be studied relative to populations in Idaho in order to identify potential genetic differences between populations in different watersheds in Montana as a result of multiple colonization events.
5. Piscicide use in waters known to contain Idaho Giant Salamanders should be eliminated or restricted.

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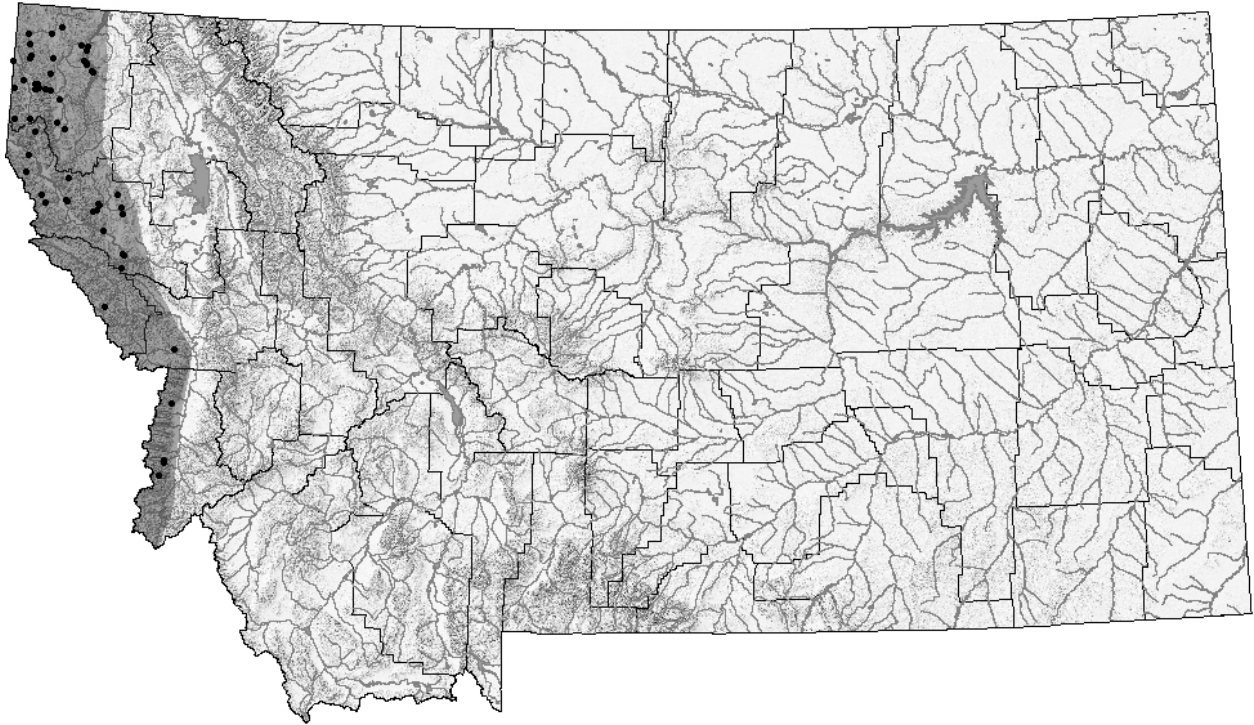
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Coeur d'Alene Salamander (*Plethodon idahoensis*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The Coeur d'Alene salamander is a distinct species inhabiting the northern Rocky Mountains in northern Idaho, northwest Montana, and southeastern British Columbia at elevations up to 1,550 M (5,086 ft) (Howard et al. 1993; Petranks 1998; Wilson et al. 1997; Wilson and Larsen 1998). In Montana they have been documented at isolated localities in a narrow band west of the Bitterroot River, Salish Mountains, and Lake Koocanusa from Sweathouse Creek in the Bitterroot Valley to just north of the town of Yaak near the Canadian border. However, given the paucity of surveys that have been conducted, it is likely that their range extends further south on the west side of the Bitterroot Valley and all the way to the Canadian border.

Maximum Elevation

1585 m (5,200 ft) in Ravalli County (Werner et al. 2004). A biogeographic analysis indicates that they may be found up to 1,800 M (5,906 ft) at the southern end of their range in Montana (Wilson and Larsen 1998). A voucher specimen was collected well above this theoretical maximum elevation at 2,438 m (8,000 ft) in Ravalli County, but because the animal was found dead on the surface it is possible that it was carried to the location (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are unlikely to be encountered because they are apparently laid in moist subterranean fractured rock sites (Lynch 1984). Laid in clusters of up to 13 eggs (Lynch 1984). Eggs are cream colored, around 5 mm in diameter, and surrounded by two jelly capsules (Larson et al. 1998).

Larvae:

There is no larval stage. Instead juveniles hatch directly from eggs.

Juveniles and Adults:

Toes are slightly webbed and shorter than the soles of the feet. A greenish-yellow, orange, or red dorsal stripe may extend from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail and a yellowish throat patch is present. Eyelids are the same color as the dorsal stripe. White flecking is present on the lateral and ventral surfaces over a black base color. 14-15 costal grooves are present. SVL of 18 to 64 mm (Lynch 1984).

Similar Species:

Adult long-toed salamanders do not have nasolabial grooves, their toes are not webbed, and the fourth toe on their hind feet is longer than the soles of their hind feet. See sections on habitat use for differences in habitat used by long-toed and Coeur d'Alene salamanders.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Coeur d'Alene salamanders respire through their skin and lose water to the environment through evaporation. They are therefore restricted to cool, damp environments (Spotila 1972; Feder 1983). Habitats are limited to springs or seeps, waterfall spray zones and damp streambanks in talus or fractured rock sites, usually with a forest canopy cover (Wilson et al. 1997). The species is found in conjunction with both persistent and intermittent surface waters, but depends on the presence of stable subterranean water flows which can be accessed through rock fractures or talus (Groves et al. 1996; Wilson et al. 1997). Adults are usually above ground only at night during moist weather when temperatures are greater than 7 degrees Celsius (Wilson and Larsen 1988). Surface activity is negatively correlated with high daytime temperatures and days since last rain (Wilson and Larsen 1988). Adults breed terrestrially in late summer, fall, and, to a lesser extent, in the spring (Lynch 1984; Lynch and Wallace 1987). Females deposit eggs in April or May, presumably in underground rock crevices, although no nest sites have been found in the wild (Lynch 1984). Juveniles emerge directly from the eggs in mid-September (Lynch 1984). Juveniles and adults prey on a variety of small aquatic or semi-aquatic invertebrates found in the habitats used by Coeur d'Alene salamanders (Wilson and Larsen 1988; Lindeman 1993).

Status and Conservation

Coeur d'Alene salamanders have only been documented at approximately 50 localities in Montana, with virtually all populations isolated by miles of unsuitable habitat that cannot be crossed. Populations that have been documented appear to remain healthy as long as their microhabitats are not disturbed. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include timber harvest, fire and fire management activities, road and trail development and maintenance, on-road vehicle use, development of water impoundments, and the isolation of individual populations as described above. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of Coeur d'Alene salamanders include the following. (1) (Wallace 1986) found that populations separated by 60 miles had little if any gene flow and concluded that current gene flow was not sufficient to maintain interpopulation similarity. In other words individual populations that are separated from others by several miles may be on separate evolutionary trajectories because there is no gene flow given

the dry intervening habitats which do not allow individuals to disperse. (2) Cassirer et al. (1994) and Groves et al. (1996) both thoroughly review potential risk factors relevant to the viability of Coeur d'Alene salamander populations and give details on how these potential risk factors can be mitigated through management actions. Both of these manuscripts should be consulted closely, but their recommendations are briefly summarized below. (3) In a conservation assessment completed for and partially sponsored by the Region 1 USFS office Cassirer et al. (1994) give details for inventorying for and monitoring Coeur d'Alene salamander populations in all Region 1 National Forests in which they have been documented. However, their inventory and monitoring suggestions were never initiated.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Additional surveys are needed in order to document the extent of the species northern, eastern, and southern range limits in the state and identify additional sites the species occupies within its known range so that these sites can be adequately protected.
2. The extent of recent and past levels of gene flow between what now seem to be highly isolated populations should be investigated at the local and regional scale in order to identify the conservation implications of the loss of individual populations or groups of populations.
3. Areas considered for timber harvest, prescribed burning, road or trail development and management, development of water impoundments, or application of chemicals should be thoroughly surveyed as outlined in Cassirer et al. (1994) and Groves et al. (1996) in order to identify any suitable habitat and/or the presence of a population.
4. The research and management suggestions outlined in Cassirer et al. (1994) and Groves et al. (1996) should be followed in order to understand and mitigate the impacts of the risk factors listed above. Briefly, they encourage leaving a 30 meter forest buffer around known sites, leaving a 100 meter buffer for roads that are to be placed upstream of known sites, conducting control burns in July and August when salamanders are inactive above ground, conducting logging activities in July, August, or November through March when salamanders are inactive above ground, avoiding applications of herbicides, pesticides, or chemicals used on roads near known sites, and monitoring sites annually at least one year prior to and three years after a management activity.
5. Previously documented sites, especially those near areas of human activity, should be monitored annually, possibly as part of an experiment designed to identify the cause and effect relationship between various human activities and the status of salamander populations (Cassirer et al. 1994).

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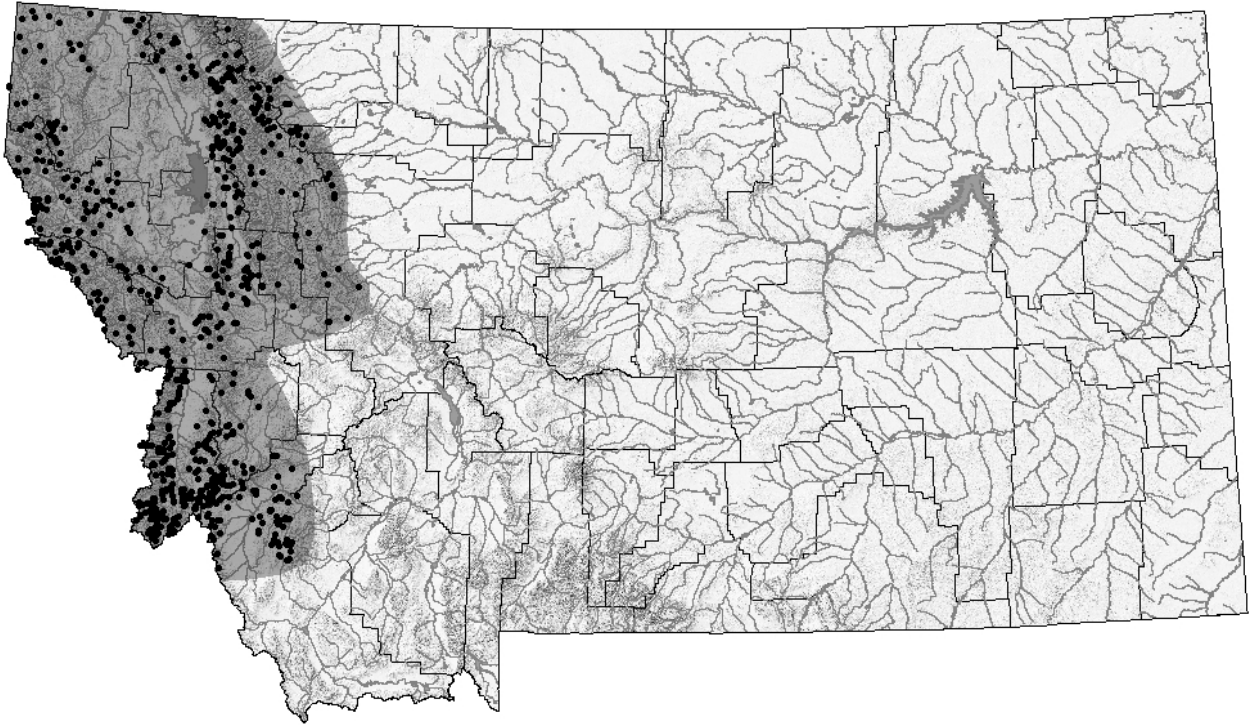
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Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus montanus*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Until recently tailed frogs were recognized as a single species with a disjunct distribution that includes a coastal population ranging from northwestern California to southwestern British Columbia separated by hundreds of miles from a Rocky Mountain population that includes isolated populations in the Blue, Wallowa and Seven Devils Mountains and a more continuous population that ranges from central Idaho to the southeast corner of British Columbia (Metter 1968). However, allozyme and mitochondrial DNA analyses indicate that the Rocky Mountain and coastal populations differ to the extent that designation of separate species is warranted (Daugherty 1979; Nielson and Lohman 2000; Marilyn Nielson, University of Idaho, pers. comm.). Populations in the Rocky Mountains and those in the Blue, Wallowa and Seven Devils Mountain Ranges are now recognized as the Rocky Mountain tailed frog (*Ascaphus montanus*) and coastal populations are now recognized as the Coastal Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus truei*) (Mittleman and Myers 1949; Marilyn Nielson, University of Idaho, pers. comm.). Across their entire range Rocky Mountain tailed frogs are known to occur at elevations up to 2,590 M (8,500 ft), or approximately treeline (Nussbaum et al. 1983; David Pilliod, Idaho State University, pers. comm.).

Maximum Elevation

2,649 m (8,691 ft) on unnamed tributary to Halfway Creek in the Pioneer Mountains in Beaverhead County (B. Murdock; MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Eggs:

Laid in a jelly string as a globular mass containing 28 to 86 eggs (Noble and Putnam 1931; Franz 1970a). Each ovum is creamy white and surrounded by two jelly layers which themselves lie within the outer jelly string (Franz 1970a). Ovum diameters are approximately 4-5 mm in diameter, but total egg diameters, including the three jelly layers, are approximately 6-7 mm (Metter 1967; Adams 1993). Clutches from multiple animals may be laid together in the same nest site (Adams 1993).

Larvae:

Base color is variable from solid black, to gray, to solid brown. White flecks may be present and most larvae have a white tail spot (Metter 1967). A large sucking disk is present around the mouth. The spiracle is mid-ventral and opens under a flap (Metter 1968). Total length (TL) of 10-64 mm (Metter 1967; Franz 1971).

Juveniles and Adults:

Pupil of the eye is vertical. Lacks external ear drums (tympanums). The cloaca of males opens into a tear-shaped copulatory organ (the "tail"). Skin is a granulated texture. Base color is brown, reddish brown, or olive gray with yellow and gray mottling dorsally and a dark eye stripe. Ventrally cream to pinkish. SVL of 20 to 57 mm (Daugherty 1979; Daugherty and Sheldon 1982a).

Similar Species:

None. No other adult anuran species lack external ear drums (tympanums). No other larval anuran species have a large sucking disk around the mouth or are found in small swift streams.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found in small (≤ 4.5 meters width), fast permanent forest streams with clear, cold water, cobble or boulder substrates, and little silt (Franz and Lee 1970; Franz 1971; Welsh 1990). In Montana, adults usually remain underwater hidden by rocks or debris and emerge at night or during humid weather from May to September to feed terrestrially along stream edges (Daugherty and Sheldon 1982a). Adults are highly philopatric, but are known to forage up to 75 meters away from water in Montana (Daugherty and Sheldon 1982b; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). However, they may range farther from water in wetter areas because Gomez and Anthony (1996) found them in pitfall traps 200 meters from streams in the Oregon Cascades and Corn and Bury (1990) found juveniles and adults ranging more than 300 meters from the nearest stream west of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon and Washington. At high elevations in Montana adults and juveniles have been found to be active diurnally in warmer standing water bodies 50-75 meters away from streams during warm dry weather (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). In Montana adults breed via internal fertilization in streams in August or September and females deposit eggs under large stones in areas with slight current the following June or July (Franz 1970a; Daugherty and Sheldon 1982a). Eggs hatch in August or September and tadpoles cling to the undersides or tops of smooth rocks which lack periphyton or silt (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Tadpoles usually metamorphose in the third summer after hatching and adults reproduce for the first time four or five years after metamorphosis; females reproduce in alternate years thereafter (Daugherty and Sheldon 1982a). Larvae feed mostly on diatoms, but also algae and small aquatic insects (Franz

1970b). Adults feed on a variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates (Metter 1964).

Status and Conservation

Tailed frogs are widely distributed and common west of the Continental Divide in smaller streams that have adequate amounts of cobble substrates. Their status in the front ranges east of the Continental Divide is uncertain. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include all the general risk factors described above (especially those which change stream morphology, and increase sedimentation and water temperature), with the exception of harvest and commerce. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of tailed frogs include the following. (1) Although the impacts of timber harvest have not been studied in Montana, numerous studies have documented the extirpation of tailed frogs at a number of locations in the Pacific Northwest as a result of increased sedimentation and water temperature resulting from timber harvest and associated road building activities (Metter 1964; Bury 1983; Bury and Corn 1988; Welsh and Lind 1988; Corn and Bury 1989; Corn and Bury 1990; Welsh 1990; Bull and Carter 1996). Because tailed frogs are highly philopatric, have limited dispersal capabilities, and are apparently somewhat reliant on old growth, streams they have been extirpated from may not be recolonized for extensive periods of time after timber harvest activities (Metter 1967; Daugherty and Sheldon 1982; Corn and Bury 1989; Welsh 1990). Furthermore, some of these same studies found that even if tailed frogs were still present after timber harvest their density and biomass was negatively affected and density and biomass were lower in younger stands than older stands (e.g., Corn and Bury 1990; Welsh 1990; Gomez and Anthony 1996). A study in the Blue Mountains of Oregon provides evidence that stream buffers do provide protection for tailed frogs in drier forests similar to those found across much of Montana. Bull and Carter (1996) found that the number of tailed frogs was best predicted by a combination of stream substrates and the presence of stream buffers. (2) Although the impacts of piscicides have not been formally investigated anecdotal evidence from treated areas in Montana suggests they may have major population-level impacts on tailed frogs (Andrew Sheldon, University of Montana, pers. comm.). Fontenot et al. (1994) and McCoid and Bettoli (1996) recently reviewed the impacts of rotenone-containing piscicides on amphibians and found that the effects of rotenone on newly metamorphosed and adult amphibians varied with the degree of each species' aquatic respiration and their likelihood of exiting treated water bodies. They found the range of lethal doses of rotenone-containing piscicides for amphibian larvae (0.1-0.580 mg/L) to overlap to a large extent with lethal doses for fish (0.0165-0.665 mg/L), and to be much lower than the concentrations commonly used in fisheries management (0.5-3.0 mg/L). The nontarget effects of another piscicide, antimycin, have apparently not been formally studied, but preliminary observations seem to indicate that antimycin is also toxic to amphibian larvae (Patla 1998). Tailed frog larvae and adults both use aquatic respiration and adults are unlikely to exit treated water bodies depending on the time of day (Daugherty and Sheldon 1982b).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Additional information is needed on their distribution east of the Continental Divide, especially in central and southwest Montana. Documentation of their presence along the upper Clark Fork River and in the Beaverhead Mountain Range is poor and their presence in the Garnet, Elkhorn, Boulder, and Highland Mountains is uncertain. Surveys in these areas could be easily done by combining them with existing fisheries surveys.

2. The most efficient method of monitoring tailed frogs is to have fisheries crews that regularly conduct surveys in headwater streams record observations of adults and larvae in areas they have used a shocker and/or kick net. These crews should be formally trained in the identification of the species and should report observations on standard forms to the database at the Montana Natural Heritage Program.
3. Studies of the impacts of timber harvest and buffer strips designed to protect headwater streams from impacts should be conducted in Montana in order to ensure that current mitigation measures are allowing isolated headwater populations to persist. Concurrent studies of the distance individuals commonly move from streams are also needed.
4. Leaving 30 to 200 meter (15 to 100 meters on either side) wide forest buffer strips has been proposed by various authors in order to protect headwater stream habitats for the persistence of tailed frogs (Corn and Bury 1989; Gomez and Anthony 1996). However, there has been no research in drier forests in Montana to support the value of a particular buffer width. Streams and lakes being considered for treatment with piscicides should be thoroughly surveyed for tailed frogs and the impacts of the proposed piscicides should be investigated in order to identify likely impact.
5. Without formal investigation of the impacts, piscicides should not be used in streams containing tailed frogs because of the possibility of removing multiple larval and adult cohorts. Other methods of removal should be explored in these instances. If piscicide use is the only option available then pretreatment gathering and posttreatment restocking of tailed frog tadpoles and adults should be undertaken and treatment should occur in the late evening hours so that adults are more likely to exit waters.

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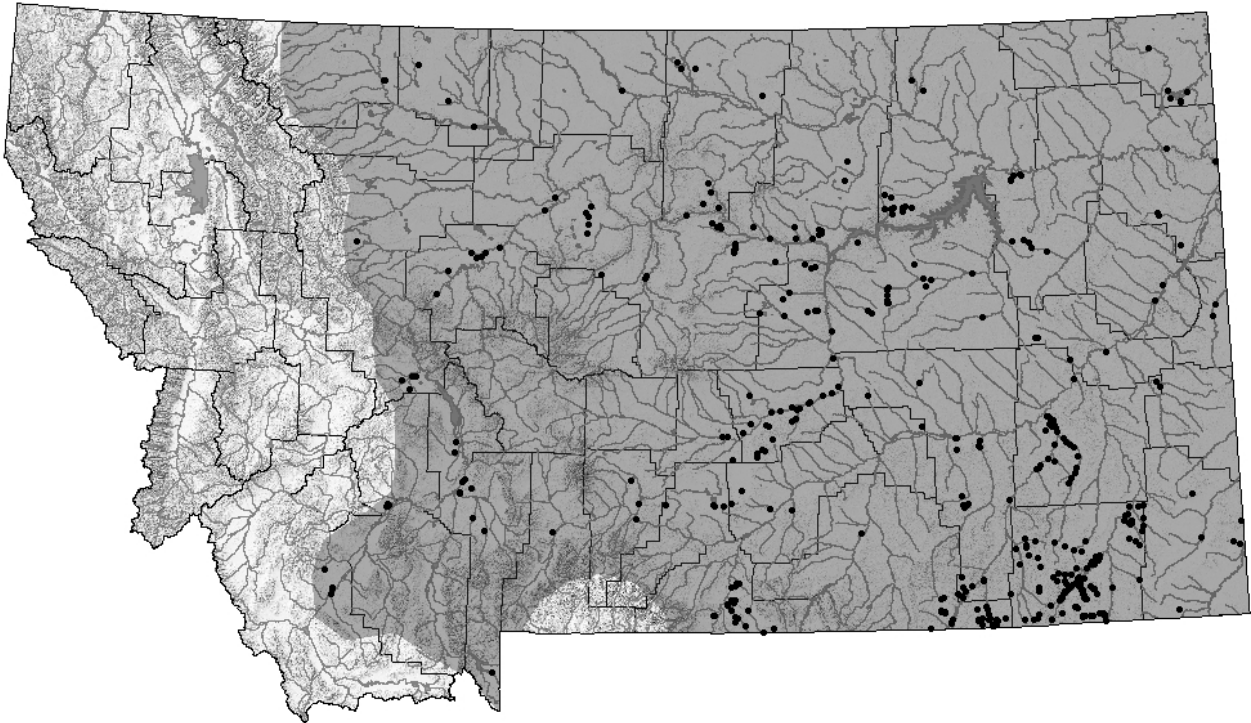
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Plains Spadefoot (*Spea bombifrons*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

There is currently some debate as to whether the plains spadefoot and other western spadefoots should be placed in the genus or *Spea* or *Scaphiopus* (Hall 1998). However, regardless of the generic name, a single distinct species is recognized as ranging across the Great Plains from northern Mexico to southern Canada at elevations up to 2,440 M (8,000 ft) (Stebbins 2003; Wiens and Titus 1991). In Montana they have been sparsely documented across the eastern plains and at a handful of locations in the mountain valleys of the upper Missouri watershed at elevations up to 1,524 M (5,000 ft).

Maximum Elevation

2,014 m (6,608 ft) near the Madison Arm of Hebgen Reservoir in Gallatin County (Ryan DeKnicker and Nichole Walker; MTNHP 2008).

Identification

Eggs:

Laid in smaller clusters 10-250 totaling up to 3,844 eggs per female (Mabry and Christiansen 1991). Each ovum is dark brown above, pale yellow below, and is surrounded by three jelly layers (two thin layers immediately adjacent to the ovum and a thicker outer layer) (Hoyt 1960). Ovum diameters are approximately 1.5 mm, but total egg diameters, including the three jelly layers, are approximately 3 mm (Hoyt 1960).

Larvae:

Light gray or brown dorsally and lighter iridescent golden ventrally (Hammerson 1999). Tail

fin is clear with sparse yellow flecks. Eyes are located dorsally. TL of 9-68 mm (Russell and Bauer 2000; Klassen 1998).

Juveniles and Adults:

Pupil of the eye is vertical. A large and usually bony bump or boss is present between the eyes (Hall 1998). A single black digging “spade” is present on the soles of the hind feet. Base color is white ventrally and ranges from light brown to dull green dorsally. Four lighter stripes and a few darker splotches are usually present laterally and dorsally and few warts are present (Hammerson 1999). SVL of 10-60 mm (Hammerson 1999; Klassen 1998).

Similar Species:

No other adult frogs or toads that are known to inhabit Montana have a rounded bony boss directly between the eyes or a vertical eye pupil. Larvae of the western toad, Great Plains toad, and Woodhouse’s toad are all dark dorsally. Larvae of Columbia spotted frogs and northern leopard frogs are much more mottled in color with gold and black flecking. See account for the Great Basin spadefoot. Adult Great Basin spadefoots have a soft and pliable boss directly between their eyes.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found on or adjacent to sandy soils in native grasslands and shrublands as well as pastures and haylands with non-native vegetation (Lauzon and Balagus 1998). Adults retreat to burrows excavated to depths of one meter in loose soils during periods when terrestrial conditions are not favorable (Russell and Bauer 2000). Adults are present on the surface on warm nights during damp and dry weather where they feed on a variety of insects, but seem to rely on lepidopterans, coleopterans, and homopterans to a greater extent (Kellog 1932; Whitaker et al. 1977). Breeding takes place in warm, often muddy, temporary water bodies formed by extensive rains when minimum temperatures are 7-12 degrees Celsius or warmer (Klassen 1998). Eggs are deposited on rocks, submerged vegetation, or loose on the bottom of the pool, and hatch in 2-3 days (Hammerson 1999). Tadpoles commonly have two morphologies, omnivores which feed on phytoplankton and detritus, and carnivores which feed on fairy shrimp, other invertebrates and frequently their own or other amphibian larvae (Bragg 1964; Pfenning 1990). Depending on conditions, time to metamorphosis can vary from 21 to more than 75 days, with carnivorous morphs reaching metamorphosis much sooner than omnivorous morphs (Gilmore 1934; Bragg 1964). Tadpoles are capable of surviving extended periods (≥ 20 hours) out of water (Moore 1937; Black 1974). Juveniles and adults are known to disperse at least 2.25 kilometers from breeding ponds (Klassen 1998).

Status and Conservation

In the past 125 years plains spadefoots have only been documented at about 40 localities across the plains and in the mountain valleys east of the Continental Divide and at the present time their status across this region is almost completely unknown. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include grazing, road and trail development, on- and off-road vehicle use, use of pesticides and herbicides, development of water impoundments, habitat loss/fragmentation, and metapopulation impacts, all as described above. However, the lack of information on the distribution, status, habitat use, and basic biology of the species may currently represent the greatest risk to the viability of the species (i.e., the species could have undergone,

or currently be undergoing, drastic declines but we lack any kind of baseline information that would allow us to make such a determination). Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of plains spadefoots include the following. (1) At least two reports indicate that non-intensive agriculture may be compatible with the survival of plains spadefoot populations. Lauzon and Balagus (1998) found them breeding in wetlands adjacent to improved pasture and haylands comprised almost completely of non-native vegetation. Klassen (1998) found spadefoots breeding in temporary pools that formed in native grasslands used as cattle pastures and some of these pools were fouled with cattle manure. However, Bragg (1937) reports that all the spadefoot eggs in pools that were heavily contaminated with fecal material from cattle died while other eggs in nearby uncontaminated pools survived. Klassen (1998) also reports that males called from a number of regularly irrigated cultivated fields and found them successfully breeding in one. Klassen (1998) indicated that irrigation may positively benefit populations by allowing regular reproduction in some areas. However, it is also conceivable that some irrigated areas may act as population sinks by drawing animals into areas where they may be impacted by agricultural chemicals or plowing which could disturb individuals in their burrows. (2) Both Bragg (1944) and Hammerson (1999) note that large numbers of plains spadefoots are killed on roads adjacent to breeding sites. (3) Hammerson (1999) notes that several populations have been extirpated due to residential and commercial development near Fort Collins, Colorado. (4) In a study of a congeneric species, Couch's spadefoot *Scaphiopus couchii*, Judd (1977) found that the herbicide monosodium methanearsonate killed 86 percent of juvenile toads when they were exposed to only one eighth of the concentration recommended for agricultural spraying. The relationship of this herbicide to commonly applied herbicides in Montana is not known, but it is likely that both herbicides and pesticides may represent a threat to plains spadefoot populations. (5) Sounds from offroad vehicles have apparently been found to impact the emergence of congeneric Couch's spadefoots from their underground burrows (Bondello and Brattstrom 1979).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of timber harvest, fire and fire management activities, and harvest and commerce.
2. More thorough documentation of their presence is needed across their entire range in the state, especially on the highline north of the Missouri River, in the mountain valleys upstream of Canyon Ferry Reservoir, and along the Musselshell and Judith Rivers.
3. Studies of their habitat use and population dynamics relative to grazing and dry and irrigated agricultural activities would identify both positive and negative impacts of these activities. The knowledge gained by such studies may be essential to their long term viability.
4. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.
5. Where populations are found to be in close proximity to areas of high human use the population impacts of vehicle use near known breeding or burrowing sites should be examined. If impacts are heavy or poorly understood then vehicle use should be curtailed or limited during major periods of activity (e.g., during breeding migrations/choruses or metamorphosis and dispersal).

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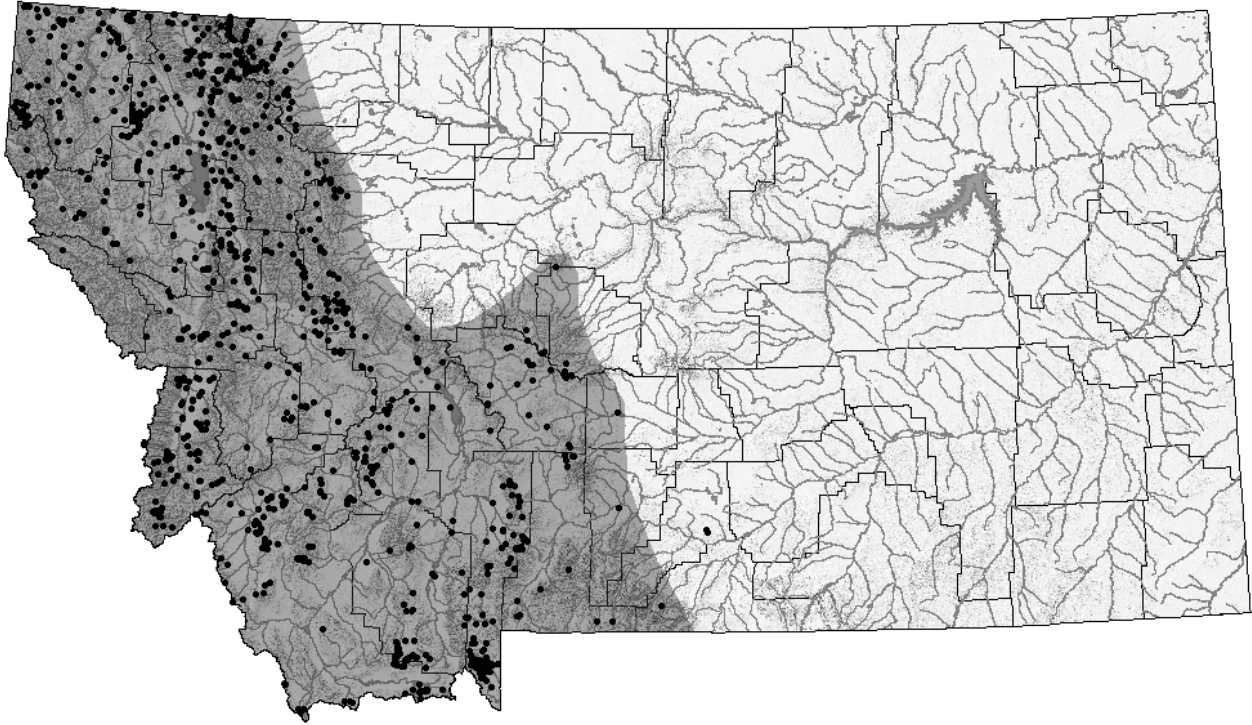
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Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The western toad is currently recognized as two subspecies that range from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast and from Baja Mexico to southeast Alaska and the Yukon Territory at elevations up to 3,640 M (11,940 ft) (Stebbins 2003; Hammerson 1999). One subspecies, the boreal toad, *Bufo boreas boreas* is currently recognized as occurring in Montana. However, mitochondrial DNA analysis indicates that four main phylogenetic groups exist and each may warrant recognition as separate species: (1) a southern Rocky Mountain group in Colorado and southern Wyoming; (2) a southern Utah group; (3) a northwest group including all specimens in Montana, northern Idaho, and northern Wyoming; and (4) a southwest group composed of individuals currently recognized as the California toad, *Bufo boreas halophilus*, the black toad, *Bufo exsul*, and the Amargosa toad, *Bufo nelsoni* (Goebel 1996). If these phylogenetic groups are eventually recognized as full species it is likely that populations across Montana and the Pacific Northwest will be recognized as the boreal toad, *Bufo boreas*. In Montana the species has been documented across the mountainous portion of the state west of the Beartooth Plateau, and the eastern edge of the Castle, Little Belt, and Highwood Mountains (Black 1970a; Black 1971).

Maximum Elevation

2,810 m (9,220 ft) in Gallatin County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Eggs:

Laid in long strings that are one to three (usually two) eggs wide in a zigzag pattern and contain

1,000 to more than 18,000 eggs (usually 6,000 to 12,000) (Livezey and Wright 1947; Samallow 1980; Olson 1988; Carey et al. 2000). Each ovum is black above, white below, and is surrounded by two jelly layers (Livezey and Wright 1947). Ovum diameters are 1.5 to 1.75 mm, but total egg diameters, including both jelly layers, are approximately 5 mm (Livezey and Wright 1947; Karlstrom 1962).

Larvae:

Body and tail musculature are black and the belly may be either black or gray (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The tail fins are both clear with dendritic pigmentation, with the dorsal tail fin having more pigmentation (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). TL of 10-38 mm (Carpenter 1953; Corkran and Thoms 2006).

Juveniles and Adults:

The skin is dry and warty and large parotid glands are present behind the eye and tympanum. The hind feet each have two light brown digging “spades” on their soles, but the spades lack a sharp cutting edge (Black 1970a; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). A white stripe extends down the center of the back in older individuals, but may be absent or inconspicuous in younger individuals (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Dorsal base color is olive green or light or dark brown with reddish or light brown color on the warts and small black spots over everything (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Ventral color is cream to tan mottled with numerous dark blotches. SVL of 11-118 mm (Black 1970a; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Similar Species:

The geographic range of Great Plains toads and Canadian toads do not overlap with the geographic range of western toads. See the geographic range of Woodhouse’s toads to see the limited areas of possible overlap. Adult Woodhouse’s toads have parallel cranial crests on the snout and behind the eyes in the shape of an “L”. Eggs and larvae of western toads, and Woodhouse’s toads are very similar and may not be differentiable by even thoroughly trained herpetologists.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found in a wide variety of habitats including wetlands, forests, woodlands, sagebrush, meadows, and floodplains in the mountains and mountain valleys (Brunson 1952; Carpenter 1953; Black 1970a; Campbell 1970c; Cavallo 1997; Hart et al. 1998). Adult and juvenile toads are freeze intolerant and overwinter and shelter in underground caverns, or more commonly in rodent burrows (Mullally 1952; Black 1970b; Smits 1984; Jones 1999). While smaller juveniles are active almost exclusively diurnally, adults are usually active at night except during the spring and at high elevation (Mullally 1958; Lillywhite et al. 1973; Sullivan 1996; Sullivan et al. 1996). Adults feed on a variety of invertebrates, but rely most heavily on ground dwelling coleopterans and hymenopterans and are known to eat smaller vertebrates including smaller individuals of their own species (Cunningham 1954; Moore and Strickland 1955; Mullally 1958; Livezey 1961; Campbell 1970a; Miller 1975, 1978; Hansen and Thomason 1991). Timing of breeding is dependent on temperature, snowmelt, and/or the presence of surface water from flooding and takes place from May to July in shallow areas of large and small lakes, beaver ponds, temporary ponds, slow-moving streams, and backwater channels of rivers (Black 1970a; Metter 1961). Water chemistry at most breeding sites generally has a high pH (>8.0), high conductivity, and

high acid-neutralizing capacity (Koch and Peterson 1995). Females wrap egg strings around emergent vegetation or loose in clumps in shallow (usually less than 15 cm) waters (Black 1970a; Hammerson 1999). Eggs hatch in approximately 5 days and tadpoles commonly form dense aggregations in shallow warmer waters as they feed on algae, detritus, and other dead tadpoles or adults (Black 1970b; Franz 1971; Loeffler 1998). Tadpoles metamorphose in mass in 40 (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.) to 75 (Loeffler 1998) days and metamorphs can be found in dense aggregations adjacent to breeding grounds (Turner 1952; Black 1969; Lillywhite and Wassersug 1974; Devito et al 1998). Adults and juveniles apparently use olfactory and celestial cues primarily to orient, respectively (Tracy and Dole 1969; Tracy 1971). Adults may move more than 800 meters in night, may move more than 4 kilometers away from water after breeding and can remain away from surface water for relatively long periods of time (Pimentel 1955; Tracy and Dole 1969; Campbell 1970; Loeffler 1998). Juveniles may disperse up to or more than 4 kilometers from their natal site (Sornborger 1979).

Status and Conservation

Within the last twenty five years populations of western toads have undergone population crashes in Colorado, Utah, southeast Wyoming, and New Mexico (Stuart and Painter 1994; Ross et al. 1995; Corn et al. 1997; Loeffler 1998). *Bufo boreas* is now listed as endangered by the State of Colorado and considered a candidate species which is warranted, but precluded, for federal listing by the USFWS in the southern Rocky Mountains (Colorado, southeast Wyoming and northern New Mexico) (Ross et al. 1995; Loeffler 1998). The estimated cost of implementing the first four years of the recovery plan for the Southern Rocky Mountain population is one million twenty-five thousand dollars (Loeffler 1998). Reports of declines in western toad populations have also been reported in Oregon and California (Blaustein et al. 1994; Stebbins and Cohen 1995; Drost and Fellers 1996; Fisher and Shaffer 1996).

Until the late 1990's many biologists believed that populations in the northern Rocky Mountains had not undergone similar declines. However, surveys in the late 1990's revealed that toads were absent from a large number of their historic localities and that although they were still widespread across the landscape they occupied an extremely small proportion of suitable habitat (less than 10% in most cases, but usually less than 5%) (Werner and Reichel 1994, 1995; Reichel 1995, 1996, 1997b; Koch and Peterson 1995; Koch et al. 1996; Hendricks and Reichel 1996; Werner et al. 1998; reviewed by Maxell et al. 1998). As a result of these findings the USFS listed the western toad as a sensitive species in all Region 1 Forests (USDAFS 1999) and initiated a regional inventory program in Montana. The systematic inventory of standing water bodies in 40 randomly chosen 6th level Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) watersheds across western Montana during the summer of 2000 also found toads to be widespread, but extremely rare. Of the 40 watersheds that were surveyed toads were found in 11 (27%), and of the 33 watersheds that contained suitable breeding habitat they were found breeding (eggs, larvae, or metamorphs observed) in 7 (21%). However, of the 347 standing water bodies that were surveyed within these watersheds toads were only found at 13 (3.7%), and were found breeding at only 9 (2.6%). Furthermore, at sites where toads were observed, only small numbers of adults or relatively small numbers of eggs or larvae were observed. Similarly, in an inventory of approximately 400 standing water bodies in Glacier National Park during the summers of 1999 and 2000, toads were found and bred at approximately 5% (Steve Corn, USGS BRD Aldo Leopold Institute, pers. comm.). Similar patterns have been observed on the Flathead Indian Reservation where

breeding occurred at only four of nine historical sites in 1999 and 2000, and at other sites several years have been skipped between breeding events (Kirwin Werner, Salish Kootenai College, pers. comm.). Thus, the evidence to date suggests that western toads have either undergone a decline in the 1980s and are now in the process of recovering, or they have undergone a decline and are continuing to decline because populations are small, isolated, and/or subject to one or more factors that are impacting populations separately or synergistically.

Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include all the risk factors described above. As a supplement to this information managers may wish to refer to Loeffler (1998) who, for the recovery of toad populations in the Southern Rocky Mountains, reviews these and other general risk factors and provides management guidelines to mitigate their impacts. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of western toads include the following. (1) Carey (1993) observed the disappearance of several populations of western toads in the West Elk Mountains of Colorado between 1974 and 1982 and during this period found many toads with symptoms of red-leg disease, a common bacterial infection in amphibians and fish. She hypothesized that an unidentified environmental factor had caused sublethal stress of the toads, which caused immune response to be suppressed leading to the systemic infection and death of toads. More recently the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, which is suspected to be responsible for declines of amphibians in Australia, Central America, and the western United States has been found to have caused mass mortalities in western toad populations in Colorado during the summer of 1999 (Berger et al. 1998; Daszak et al. 1999, 2000; Morell 1999; Milius 1999, 2000; Carey 2000). As was observed for declines in the late 1970's and early 1980's only metamorphosed individuals died (Carey et al. 2000). The fungus only seems to attack keratinized tissues, so metamorphosed individuals with lots of keratinized tissues die and tadpoles with keratinized tissues only around the mouthparts survive until metamorphosis (Berger et al. 1998; Morell 1999). Another line of evidence to suggest that the chytrid fungus was responsible for declines in the late 1970's and early 1980's is that northern leopard frog populations in Colorado crashed at the same time that western toad populations did in the late 1970's and museum specimens of northern leopard frogs that were collected during these time period have now been found to have the chytrid fungus (Daszak 1999; Milius 2000). Thus, the chytrid fungus may be the most likely cause of declines of western toads and the near extirpation of northern leopard frogs in western Montana in the late 1970's and early 1980's and clearly represents a threat to populations today. Another fungus, *Saprolegnia ferax*, has been found to cause 95% mortality of an estimated 2,496,000 western toad embryos at a site in Oregon (Blaustein et al. 1994b). Spread of the fungus between egg strings is enhanced by the behavior of toads because females often deposit eggs communally (Kiesecker and Blaustein 1997). (2) Hailman (1984) found that western toads tended to congregate around roads in the late evening and early morning. Cunningham (1954) found hundreds of toads flattened on a highway the morning following a summer thunderstorm. (3) Olson (1989, 1992) reports that ravens killed large number of breeding western toads (20% of the entire breeding population at one site) at three sites in the Oregon Cascades. The author speculates that human activity near these sites may serve to concentrate raven activity in the area and subsequently leads to toad predation. Similarly, Brothers (1994) found toads being preyed on by crows and Beiswenger (1981) found tadpoles being preyed upon by gray jays. Furthermore, Jones et al. (1999) report predation of western toad tadpoles, metamorphs, and adults by a number of avian and mammalian species that

may be attracted to areas of human activity and/or subsidized by the presence of humans, subsequently leading to increased rates of predation. These animals included mallards, spotted sandpipers, robins, red fox, raccoon, and a domestic dog. Kagarise Sherman and Morton (1993) also report high levels of predation on breeding aggregations of the closely related Yosemite toad by Clark's nutcrackers, California Gulls, and ravens. Fisher and Shaffer (1996) implicate introduced bullfrog and fish predators in the decline of western toads in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys in California. However, Jones et al. (1999) found that neither cutthroat trout or brook trout would prey on tadpoles and Licht (1968) found that toad eggs were not palatable to fish. Furthermore, both Drost and Fellers (1996) and Corn et al. (1997) found toads breeding at sites with and without fish. (4) After what may have been the first successful reproductive event at a site in southeastern Idaho in 10 years Bartelt (1998) documented the deaths of thousands of western toad metamorphs when 500-1,000 sheep were herded through the drying pond the toadlets were concentrated around. He found that hundreds of animals had been directly killed underfoot and hundreds more died soon afterward as a result of dessication because the vegetation they had been hiding in had been trampled to the point that it no longer provided a moist microhabitat. (5) Antimycin and rotenone, two commonly used piscicides, are both toxic to toad tadpoles (Loeffler 1998). (6) Johnson and Prine (1976) exposed juvenile western toads to the insecticides Abate, fenthion, chlorpyrifos-methyl, chlorpyrifos-ethyl, methylparathion, and the insect growth regulator Altosid for 24 hours at one half the concentrations usually applied in the field. They found that toads exposed to the insecticides reduced their activity levels and had lower tolerance to high temperatures than toads in the control group. (7) Porter and Hakanson (1976) found that a variety of heavy metals found in drainage water from mines in Colorado were highly lethal to western toad larvae. Furthermore, they found that lethal pH for tadpoles ranges from 3.1 to 4.0. Other studies report that no significant embryo mortality is observed for western toads until pH falls below 4.9, but embryos have an LC_{50} at pH less than or equal to 4.5 (Corn et al. 1989; Corn and Vertucci 1992; Vertucci and Corn 1996). (8) In Oregon Blaustein et al. (1994a) found that survival rates for western toad embryos was lower when they were exposed to ambient UV-B radiation than when they were shielded from UV-B radiation and attributed this to the presence of low levels of photolyase, an enzyme that is known to repair UV-B damage to DNA. However, Kiesecker and Blaustein (1995) found that UV-B may only be impacting embryo survival as a result of a synergistic interaction with the fungus *Saprolegnia ferax*. They found that embryos had 95-100% survival rates when exposed to ambient UV-B radiation in the absence of *Saprolegnia*. However, when embryos were infected with *Saprolegnia* survival dropped to 50% at ambient UV-B levels. Similarly, Corn (1998) failed to find a relationship between exposure to UV-B and embryo survival to hatching in Colorado and noted that a number of other studies have also failed to find a convincing impact of ambient levels of UV-B radiation on amphibian embryos. At artificially high levels of UV-B exposure Worrest and Kimeldorf (1975) report a decline in larval survivorship of western toads from 94-100% in controls to 0%, 17%, and 41% for UV-B treatments exposed to 0, 2, and 4 hours of photoreactivating (>315 nm) light following UV-B exposure.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above. In addition, for the recovery of toad populations in the Southern Rocky Mountains Loeffler (1998) reviews these and other general risk factors and provides management guidelines to mitigate their impacts.

2. Additional information is needed on their present distribution across their known range in Montana, especially on the Beartooth Plateau, in the southwest corner of the state between the Big Hole Valley and the Madison Mountain Range, along the upper Clark Fork River, and in the Big Belt and Highwood Mountain ranges. Their presence in the Big Snowy, Crazy, Highwood, Ruby, Tendoy, and Snow Crest Mountain Ranges is uncertain. Voucher specimens should be gathered at new found breeding localities, but vouchers should be limited to larvae or metamorphs.
3. Given the results of recent surveys, all previously documented breeding sites in western Montana should be resurveyed at least twice during an upcoming summer in order to identify possible changes in the short- and long-term regional status of western toad populations.
4. All known breeding sites should be monitored annually in order to determine the status of populations relative to various management activities and detect and prevent future declines.
5. Demographic vital rates reported in the scientific literature and recent information on site occupancy rates across the landscape should be used in metapopulation models in order to help determine whether populations in Montana are likely to persist over the long term (e.g., 25, 50, and 100 years).
6. Demographic vital rate information (fecundity, life stage specific survival rates, longevity, and migration and dispersal distances) should be gathered at a number of sites across western Montana in order to better understand the population and metapopulation dynamics of the species and identify mechanisms of mortality for all life history stages.
7. Museum specimens collected since the late 1970's should be examined for the presence of the chytrid fungus. Furthermore, because amphibians sold in pet stores may be introduced into the wild and act as vectors for pathogens, they should be examined and formally certified as free of pathogens such as the chytrid fungus.
8. Known toad breeding sites that are within grazing allotments should have livestock removed or fenced from the area at the time of breeding and at the time of metamorphosis in order to prevent mass mortality of aggregations of adults or metamorphs as a result of trampling.
9. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.
10. Before piscicides are used in fish removal projects the area should be surveyed for the presence of toad breeding, and/or eggs and tadpoles. If tadpoles are present in a site that is about to be treated, tadpoles can be netted, placed in holding tanks for a few days, and returned to the site after the piscicide has cleared.

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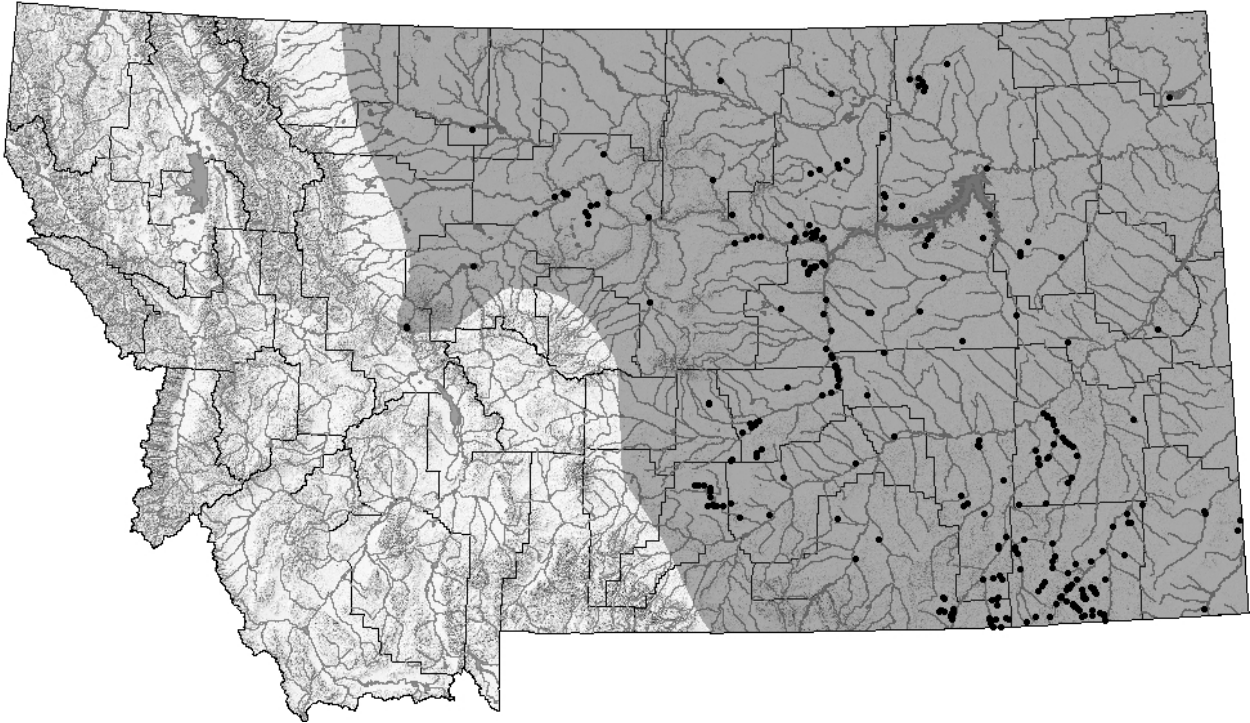
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Great Plains Toad (*Bufo cognatus*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The Great Plains toad is recognized as a distinct species that ranges across the Great Plains from central Mexico to southeastern Alberta and in the desert southwest as far west as eastern California and as far north as southern Utah at elevations up to 2,440 M (8,000 ft) (Stebbins 2003; Goebel 1996). In Montana they have been sparsely documented across the plains east of Shelby, Great Falls, Lewiston, and Billings.

Maximum Elevation

1,300 m (4,265 ft) 6.8 km southeast of Wallop Butte in southwest Powder River County (Chris Hays and David Herasimtschuk; MTNHP 2008).

Identification

Eggs:

Laid communally in single or more rarely double strings containing 1,342 to 45,054 eggs (Bragg 1937a; Krupa 1994). Each ovum is black above, shaded progressively lighter to white below, and surrounded by two jelly layers, including the outer jelly layer that composes the string (Bragg 1937a). Ovum diameters are approximately 1.2 mm, but total egg diameters, including the two jelly layers are approximately 2.0 mm; jelly string widths between eggs are approximately 1.7 mm (Bragg 1937a).

Larvae:

Mottled brown and gray dorsally and with a light greenish-yellow and reddish iridescence ventrally (Bragg 1936). The dorsal tail fin is dendritically pigmented and highly arched while

the ventral tail fin is of uniform width and transparent (Bragg 1936). TL of 8-29 mm (Bragg 1936; Bragg 1940)

Juveniles and Adults:

With the exception of small metamorphs a large bony plate or shield covers the snout from the tip of the snout to the front of the eyes. Also with the exception of small metamorphs cranial crests are present behind the eyes and also converge toward the shield on the snout to form a “V” shape between the eyes (Krupa 1990). Large parotid glands are present behind the eyes. The hind feet each have two dark digging “spades” on their soles. A white stripe usually extends down the center of the back and large paired green to brown blotches are present dorsally and are outlined or separated by white bands (Krupa 1990). Cream to white colored ventrally (Krupa 1990). SVL of 11-115 mm (Bragg 1937b; Bragg 1940; Krupa 1990).

Similar Species:

The geographic range of western toads does not overlap with the geographic range of Great Plains toads and adult western toads lack cranial crests. If present in Montana Canadian toads are probably limited to the extreme northeast corner of the state and adult Canadian toads either lack or have weakly developed cranial crests behind the eyes. Although overlap in habitat use exists Woodhouse’s toads seem to be more commonly associated with sandy soils on floodplains while the Great plains toad is more commonly associated with heavier soils in upland habitats (Timken and Dunlap 1965). Adult Woodhouse’s toads lack the shield on the tip of the snout and have “L” shaped cranial crests between and in back of each eye. Metamorph Woodhouse’s toads lack the large paired dorsal blotches that are present on Great Plains Toads (Bragg 1937b). Eggs and larvae of Woodhouse’s toads and Great Plains toads are very similar and may not be differentiable by even thoroughly trained herpetologists. However eggs and larvae of Woodhouse’s toads are much more likely to be found in permanent or semi-permanent waters than those of Great Plains toads (Bragg 1940).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found in floodplain habitats, but more common in upland grasslands with harder packed soils (Bragg 1940; Smith and Bragg 1949; Timken and Dunlap 1965). Adults lie dormant in rodent or self-excavated burrows when terrestrial conditions are not favorable, but emerge during warmer and moister periods to feed on a variety of terrestrial invertebrates (Bragg 1937a; Smith and Bragg 1949; Dimmitt and Ruibal 1980; Flowers and Graves 1994, 1995). Breeding takes place in clear shallow temporary pools almost exclusively after heavy late spring and summer rains when minimum temperatures are above 12 degrees Celsius (Bragg 1937a; Bragg 1940; Krupa 1994). Eggs are wrapped around vegetation on the pond bottom and hatch in 2-3 days (Bragg 1937a; Bragg 1940). Tadpoles metamorphose in 18 to 45 days (Bragg 1937b; Bragg 1940; Krupa 1994). Tadpoles are herbivorous and detritivorous (Bragg 1940). Creusere and Whitford (1976) found individuals 1,600 meters from the nearest breeding site, but is likely that they range farther than this. Population explosions and mass unidirectional migrations have been reported for local areas as well as regions as large as several thousand square miles in area (Bragg and Brooks 1958).

Status and Conservation

In the past 150 years Great Plains toads have only been documented at about 30 localities across

the plains east of the Rocky Mountains and at the present time their status across this region is almost completely unknown. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include grazing, use of pesticides and herbicides, nonindigenous species, road and trail development, on- and off-road vehicle use, development of water impoundments, habitat loss/fragmentation, and metapopulation impacts, all as described above. However, the lack of information on the distribution, status, habitat use, and basic biology of the species may currently represent the greatest risk to the viability of the species (i.e., the species could have undergone, or currently be undergoing, drastic declines but we lack any kind of baseline information that would allow us to make such a determination). Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of Great Plains toads include the following. (1) Bragg (1937a) reports that all Great Plains toad eggs in pools that were heavily contaminated with fecal material from cattle died while other eggs in nearby uncontaminated pools survived. (2) Several authors report that large numbers are killed on highways by motor vehicles (Bragg 1940; Bragg and Brooks 1958; Hammerson 1999). Bragg and Brooks (1958) report a mean of 60 individuals per 30 linear feet of highway were killed on roads in North Dakota and Minnesota during a population explosion and mass migration event. (3) Hammerson (1999) notes that several populations have been extirpated due to residential and commercial development in Colorado. (4) Stuart (1995) found exotic bullfrogs preying on Great Plains toads. (5) Great Plains toads often occupy prairie dog burrows and these burrows may serve as critical refugia for the species (Craig Knowles, Fauna West Wildlife Consultants, pers. comm.).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of timber harvest, fire and fire management activities, and harvest and commerce.
2. More thorough documentation of their presence is needed across their entire range in the state.
3. Because morphologic characters have proved to be of little use, genetic tools should be developed to differentiate between tadpoles of *B. cognatus* and *B. woodhousii*.
4. Studies of their habitat use and population dynamics relative to prairie dog towns and grazing and dry and irrigated agricultural activities may be essential to their long term viability.
5. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.
6. Where populations are found to be in close proximity to areas of high human use the population impacts of vehicle use near known breeding or burrowing sites should be examined. If impacts are heavy or poorly understood then vehicle use should be curtailed or limited during major periods of activity (e.g., during breeding migrations/choruses or metamorphosis and dispersal).

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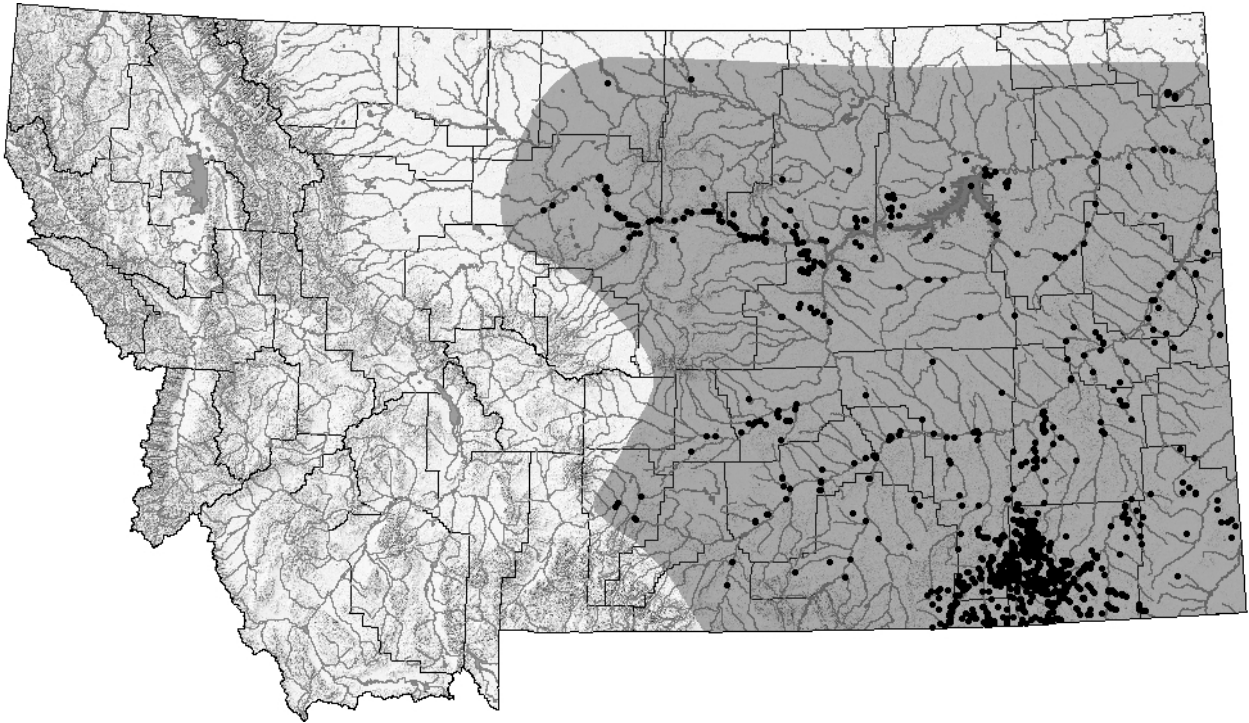
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Woodhouse's Toad (*Bufo woodhousii*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The systematics of the Woodhouse's toad species complex have a long history, but most authors now seem to agree that allozyme and call differentiation studies support evidence for the existence of two subspecies that range from southern Texas to northern Montana and North Dakota, across the desert southwest to northern Utah, and as isolated populations in Idaho, Washington and California (Stebbins 2003; Conant and Collins 1998; Gergus 1994 as cited in Sullivan et al. 1996; Sullivan et al. 1996). Across this range they have been reported at elevations up to 2,440 M (8,000 ft) (Hammerson 1999). Only the Woodhouse's toad, *Bufo w. woodhousii*, is present in Montana and they have been documented across the plains east of Livingston and Fort Benton and south of the Milk and Missouri Rivers.

Maximum Elevation

1,326 m (4,350 ft) in Rosebud County (FWP Prairie Fish Survey Crew, MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Eggs:

Laid in long single or double strings containing up to, and possibly more than, 28,493 eggs (Smith 1934; Krupa 1995). Each ovum is black above, gray below, and is loose within the outer jelly string (Smith 1934). Ovum diameters are 1.0 to 1.4 mm, but total egg diameters, including the outer jelly string are approximately 3.5 mm (Smith 1934).

Larvae:

Body and tail musculature is black to dark brown with gold flecking dorsally and laterally and

gray to white ventrally (Youngstrom and Smith 1936). The dorsal tail fin is dendritically pigmented and the ventral tail fin is clear. TL of 2.5 to 35 mm (Youngstrom and Smith 1934; Hammerson 1999).

Juveniles and Adults:

With the exception of small metamorphs parallel cranial crests are found on the snout and behind the eyes in the shape of an “L”. Large parotid glands are present behind the eyes. The hind feet each have two dark digging “spades” on their soles. A white stripe extends down the center of the back and is surrounded by a green and creamy yellowish mottling with more green toward the center line and more creamy yellow toward the lateral surface. Usually completely white ventrally, but some black spotting may be present (Bragg 1940; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). SVL of 10-120 mm (Smith 1934; Underhill 1960).

Similar Species:

See the geographic range of western toads to see possible areas of overlap. Adult western toads lack cranial crests and are rarely found in areas far from forests. Although overlap in habitat use exists the Great Plains toad is more commonly associated with heavier soils in upland habitats (Timken and Dunlap 1965). Adult Great Plains toads have a raised shield on the tip of the snout and the cranial crests between their eyes diverge to form a “V”. Metamorph Great Plains toads have large paired dorsal blotches. Eggs and larvae of western toads, Great Plains toads, and Canadian toads are very similar and may not be differentiable by even thoroughly trained herpetologists. However eggs and larvae of Great Plains toads are more likely to be found in temporary waters and the Canadian toad, if present, is likely to only occur in the extreme northeast corner of the state.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found in upland habitats with harder soils around areas with permanent waters, but most common in floodplain habitats with loose sandy soils (Bragg 1940; Timken and Dunlap 1965; Black 1970). Adults feed on a variety of invertebrates and shelter under surface debris, in rodent burrows, or in shallow, self excavated burrows when terrestrial conditions are not favorable (Bragg 1940; Smith and Bragg 1949; Clarke 1974; Labanick and Schleuter 1996; Flowers and Graves 1995; Swanson et al. 1996). Breeding usually takes place during or after spring or summer rains when temperatures are at least 10 degrees Celsius, but choruses may form in drier weather and larger breeding choruses may only form at or above 16 degrees Celsius (Breden 1988). Egg strings are wrapped around vegetation in shallow areas of lakes, reservoirs, river backwaters, floodplain pools, and irrigation ditches (Black 1970, Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Tadpoles hatch within three days, feed on algae and detritus, and usually transform in 5-8 weeks (Youngstrom and Smith 1936; Bragg 1940; Breden 1988). Adults are known to live up to 19 years of age (Engeman and Engeman 1996). Juveniles may not normally move more than a 200 meters from natal sites, but individuals are known to disperse up to 2 kilometers from natal breeding sites (Breden 1988).

Status and Conservation

Woodhouse's toads are widely distributed and common in river valleys, smaller water courses with pools, and artificial permanent water bodies on the prairies east of the Rocky Mountains and island mountain ranges. However, their status north of the Missouri River is largely uncertain.

Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include grazing, nonindigenous species and their management, road and trail development and on- and off-road vehicle use, development of water impoundments, and habitat fragmentation, all as described above. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of tiger salamanders include the following. (1) Taylor et al. (1999) found that Woodhouse's toad adults exposed to 0.0011 mg/g of toad (a level similar to levels commonly applied) of the pesticide Malathion suffered 40% mortality rates. Furthermore, when exposed to Malathion and subsequently injected with the bacteria *Aeromonas hydrophila* the mortality rate. Thus, the application of the pesticide clearly reduced the immune function of toads. Similarly, Ferguson and Gilbert (1967) found juvenile Woodhouse's toads to be very sensitive to the insecticides aldrin and dieldrin, but found that animals collected from sites that were contaminated with these chemicals exhibited up to a 200-fold increase in resistance over animals collected from pristine sites. Finally, Sanders (1970) studied the sensitivities of larval Woodhouse's toads to 18 pesticides and herbicides and found most of them to result in high rates of mortality when exposed for 48 or 96 hours. However, a number of pesticides and herbicides had significant impacts on survival after a 24 hour exposure. The extent of the application of these herbicides and pesticides in Montana is not known, but it is likely that both herbicides and pesticides represent lethal and sublethal threats to Woodhouse's toad populations. (2) Bragg (1940) and Hammerson (1999) both report that thousands of Woodhouse's toads are killed by on roads near breeding sites. Furthermore, Barrass (1986) found that noise associated with highway traffic alters the reproductive behaviour of Woodhouse's toads. Animals were less likely to move toward a breeding chorus and were more likely to call closer to one another in an established chorus in the presence of highway noise. (3) Freda and Dunson (1986) found embryos were intolerant of low pH ($\text{pH} \leq 4.0$) in the lab and were absent from all ponds with pH lower than 4.1. Furthermore, they found that larvae grew significantly slower in waters with pH less than 6.0. Pierce and Montgomery (1989) exposed larvae to short term acidic conditions (three days in water at $\text{pH} = 4.0$) and found that while short term exposures temporarily reduced the growth rates of individuals, long-term effects on growth, size at metamorphosis, and time to metamorphosis were not evident. (4) Many toad larvae are unpalatable to fish and may, therefore, have some resistance to the impacts of fish introductions. Kruse and Stone (1984) found that largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) learned to avoid feeding on Woodhouse's toad tadpoles because of their unpalatability and aggregative behavior. However, bass did still prey on some tadpoles and the indirect effects of fish may still have considerable consequences. For example, Lawler (1989) found Woodhouse's toad tadpoles to greatly reduce activity levels in the presence of a fish predator. This decreases their foraging efficiency and increases their larval period, which exposes them to other predators for a longer period of time. (5) Bragg (1940) reports that they are preyed upon by bullfrogs. (6) Bragg (1940) notes that young toads are commonly used as fish bait in Oklahoma.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of timber harvest, fire and fire management activities, and harvest and commerce.
2. Documentation of their presence between the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers is poor and their presence and/or status north of the Missouri and Milk Rivers and west of Fort Benton is uncertain.

3. Studies of their habitat use and population dynamics relative to grazing and dry and irrigated agricultural activities would identify both positive and negative impacts of these activities.
4. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.
5. If populations are found in close proximity to areas of high human use the population impacts of vehicle use near known breeding or burrowing sites should be examined. If impacts are heavy or poorly understood then vehicle use should be curtailed or limited during major periods of activity (e.g., during breeding migrations/choruses or metamorphosis and dispersal).

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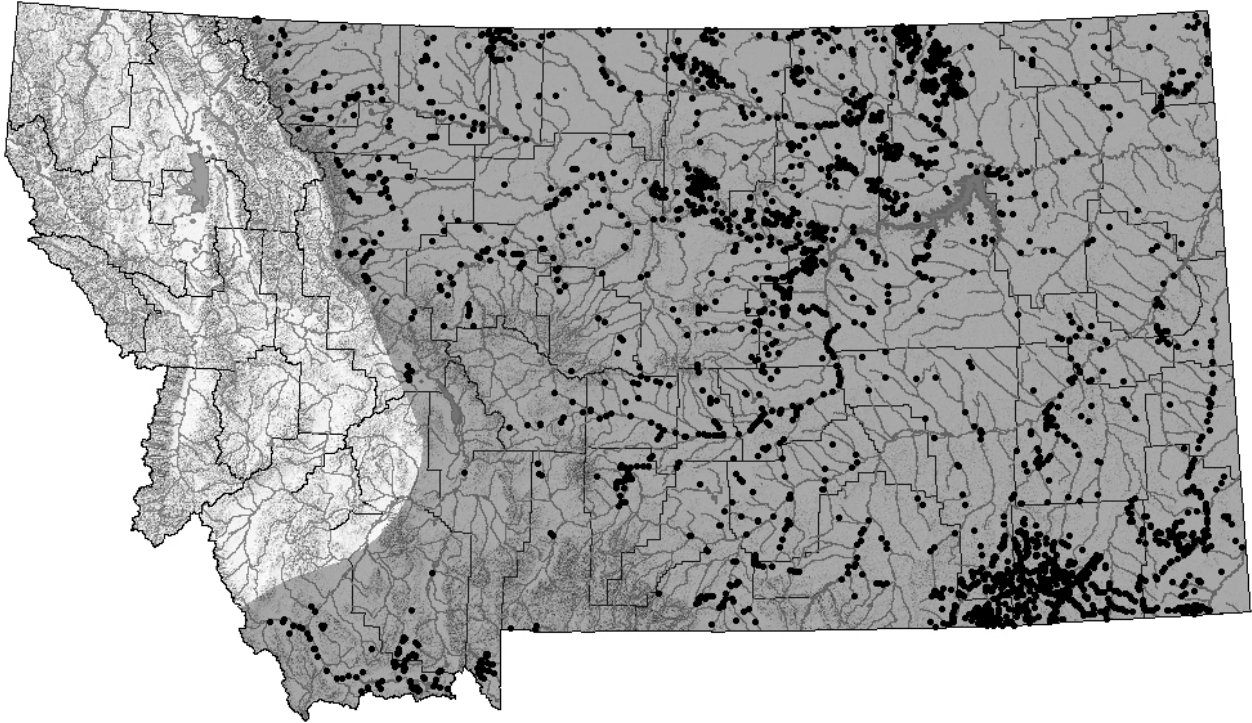
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Boreal Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris maculata*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Although there is debate about whether subspecific or specific status should be assigned, most authorities recognize four geographic varieties of *Pseudacris triseriata* which range from Great Slave Lake and Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico and from New Jersey to western Idaho at elevations up to 3,720 M (12,200 ft) (Hedges 1986; Platz and Forester 1988; Platz 1989; Conant and Collins 1998; Hammerson 1999). Only one variety, the boreal chorus frog, *Pseudacris maculata* (full species recognition) or *Pseudacris triseriata maculata* (subspecies recognition), is recognized as occurring in Montana. In Montana they have been documented east of the Continental Divide and the Big Hole Valley.

Maximum Elevation

2,841 m (9,320 ft) just east southeast of Black Butte in southern Madison County (Matt Bell; MTNHP 2008).

Identification

Eggs:

Although individual females are known to lay 137 to 793 (mean = 455, SE = 47, N = 16 at a site in Colorado) eggs at a time, eggs are usually deposited in a number of clutches a few centimeters in size containing 7 to 190 eggs (Pack 1920; Pettus and Angleton 1967). Each ovum is black above, white to cream below and is surrounded by a single layer of jelly (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Ovum diameters are 0.8 to 1.3 mm (Pettus and Angleton 1967; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.), but total egg diameters, including the jelly layer may vary from 4.0 to 6.0 mm (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Larvae:

Eyes outside the outline of the body when viewed from above. Mottled with brown and gold dorsally and pale gold to clear ventrally (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The dorsal tail fin is highly arched and dendritically pigmented with gold while the ventral tail fin is a uniform width and transparent (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). TL of 4.8-52 mm (Pettus and Angleton 1967; Hammerson 1999).

Juveniles and Adults:

The ends of the toes have minute disks or toe pads and there is little webbing between any of the toes (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Dorsal base color is cream, gray, brown, or green, with three green, brown, or gray stripes or rows of spots dorsally and a one row laterally (Smith 1956; Corn 1980a; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Cream colored ventrally, possibly with a few small black spots. SVL of 7.0-38 mm (Blair 1951; Pettus and Angleton 1967).

Similar Species:

The adults of all other frogs and toads in Montana are much larger and, with the exception of Pacific treefrogs, have webbing between the toes on their hind feet. With the exception of Pacific treefrogs, the eyes of the tadpoles of all the other frogs and toads in Montana do not stick out beyond the body outline when viewed from above. The geographic range of the Pacific treefrog does not overlap with the geographic range of the boreal chorus frog (see sections on distribution).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Typically found within 100 meters of permanent or temporary waters in grasslands, shrublands, or forest parklands (Kramer 1974; Roberts and Lewin 1979). Adults are freeze tolerant and overwinter and aestivate in underground rodent burrows or underneath thick vegetation or debris (Whitaker 1971; Swanson et al. 1996). Adults and juveniles feed on a variety of arthropods as well as their own shed skins and vegetation (Moore and Strickland 1954; Whitaker 1971). Although adults may call throughout the spring, summer, and early fall after rains or in irrigated fields, breeding takes place from late April to June in a variety of shallow water bodies (Cope 1879; Roberts and Lewin 1979; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Females may deposit eggs over several days on grass stems or other emergent vegetation in only a few inches of water (Livezey 1952). Eggs usually hatch in 5 to 14 days and tadpoles metamorphose in approximately two months (Livezey 1952; Nussbaum et al. 1983). Tadpoles feed on a variety of algae (Whitaker 1971). Individuals may commonly undergo seasonal migrations of 250 meters, but apparently do not normally disperse more than 700 meters from their natal sites (Spencer 1964).

Status and Conservation

With larvae being found in most temporary standing waterbodies and in shallower portions of permanent standing water bodies that lack fish boreal chorus frogs may be the most widely distributed and common amphibian species at low to mid elevations east of the Continental Divide. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include all the general risk factors described above with the exception of timber harvest and harvest and commerce. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of boreal chorus frogs include the following. (1) Sanders (1970) studied the sensitivities of one week old chorus frog tadpoles to 16 pesticides and herbicides and found most

of them to result in high rates of mortality when exposed for 48 or 96 hours. Powell et al. (1982) found that the insecticide fenthion formulated with either water or diesel oil had not bioaccumulated in adult chorus frogs three days after exposure at commonly applied levels. However, as noted by the authors it may be unlikely that the adults would bioaccumulate the pesticide because individuals would not be likely to have eaten insects that had been exposed (frogs do not normally eat dead prey). The authors warn that tadpoles may be more sensitive to bioaccumulation because they ingest algae that would likely be contaminated. The relationship of the inactive and active ingredients in these pesticides to commonly applied pesticides in Montana is not known, but it is likely that both pesticides and herbicides may represent lethal and/or sublethal threats to boreal chorus frog populations. (2) Hecnar (1995) found that acute and chronic toxic effects of ammonium nitrate were observed in chorus frog tadpoles at concentrations that are commonly exceeded in agricultural areas. Acute exposures to ammonium nitrate fertilizers at 20 mg/L for 96 hours resulted in 50 percent mortality and significant weight loss in those individuals that survived. Chronic exposures to 10 mg/L for 100 days resulted in significantly lower survivorship. (3) Corn et al. (1997) found that boreal chorus frogs were commonly breeding at sites where trout were present, but noted that tadpoles of the species are often only found in heavily vegetated shallow water where they are not likely to be exposed to fish predation. (4) Corn et al. (1989) found that embryos from a clutch of boreal chorus frog eggs did not suffer significantly higher mortality rates until pH dropped below 5.2, but had an LC₅₀ at pH 4.8, and suffered 100% mortality at pH 4.6. However, at the larval stage, Kiesecker (1996) found that survival rate, growth rate, mass, and time to metamorphosis did not change when pH was at 4.5, 5.5, 6.0, and 7.0.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of timber harvest, fire and fire management activities, and harvest and commerce.
2. Additional information is needed on their distribution within the triangle between the Big Belt Mountains, the Big Hole Valley, and the southeastern corner of the Beartooth Plateau. Their presence in much of this area is uncertain and it is possible that they cross the Continental Divide into the upper Clark Fork watershed near Homestake, Pipestone, and Deerlodge passes.
3. Studies of their habitat use and population dynamics relative to grazing and dry and irrigated agricultural activities would identify both positive and negative impacts of these activities.
4. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.

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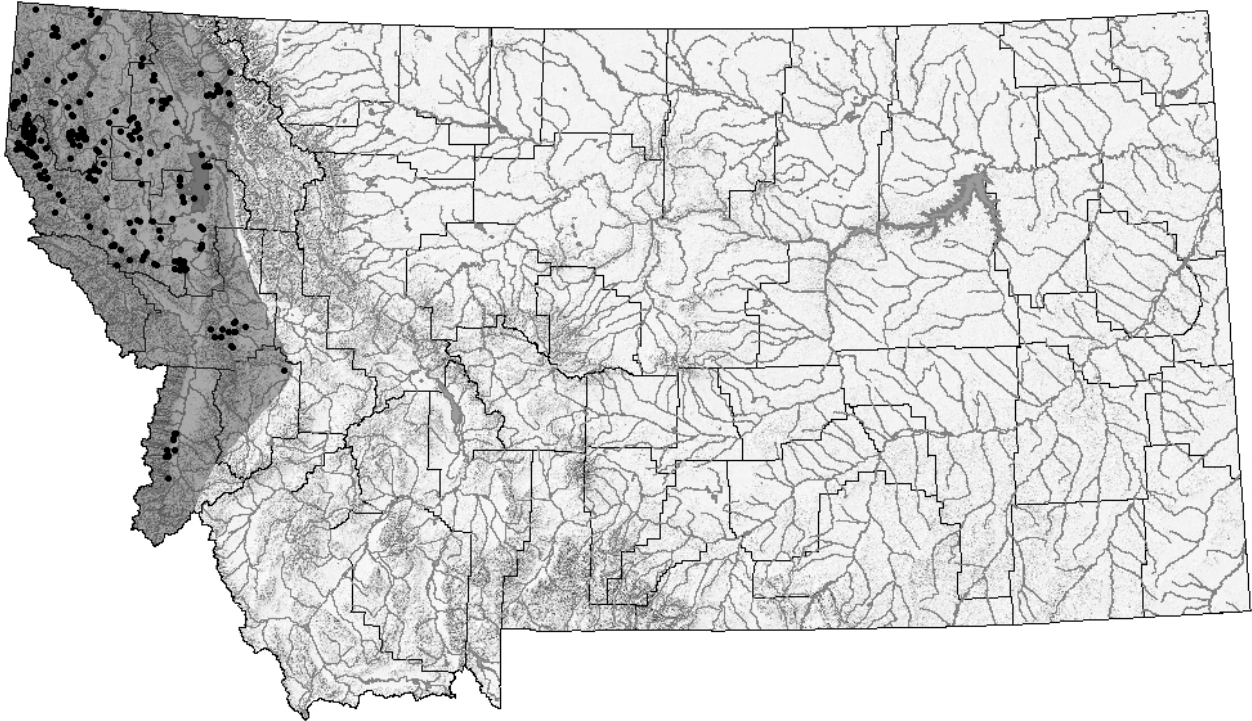
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Pacific Treefrog (*Pseudacris regilla*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

There is currently some debate as to whether the Pacific treefrog should be placed in genus *Hyla* or *Pseudacris* (Hedges 1986; Cocroft 1994). However, regardless of the generic name, a single distinct species is recognized as ranging from southern British Columbia through the Pacific Northwest and western Great Basin to the tip of Baja Mexico at elevations up to 3,536 M (11,600 ft) (Stebbins 2003). In Montana they have been documented with a more or less continuous distribution north of the Missoula and Mineral County lines and west of the Mission, Swan, and Livingston Ranges. In addition isolated populations are present in the southern Bitterroot Valley near Lake Como, and at several locations along the Blackfoot River between Missoula and the junction of the Clearwater River and on the upper Clark Fork River between Missoula and Drummond.

Maximum Elevation

1,810 m (5,940 ft) at headwaters of Skid Creek between Lydia Mountain and Sutton Mountain in northeast Lincoln County (Andy Brown and Tomi Sugahara; MTNHP 2008).

Identification

Eggs:

Although individual females are known to lay 500 to 750 eggs (Smith 1940), eggs are usually deposited in a number of clutches a few centimeters in size containing 18-119 eggs ($X = 68$, $SD = 26.5$, $N = 25$ across 4 sites in northwest Montana) (Werner et al. 1998; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Each ovum is dark gray to tan above, white to cream below, and is surrounded by two jelly layers (Gaudin 1965; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Ovum diameters are approximately 1.3

mm, but total egg diameters, including the two jelly layers are 4.6 to 6.7 mm (Gaudin 1965).

Larvae:

Eyes are outside the outline of the body when viewed from above (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Tail musculature and dorsal portion of the body are tan with brown mottling and metallic gold flecks. Iridescent copper color laterally and a clear to whitish color ventrally (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The dorsal and ventral tail fins are clear with numerous brown and metallic gold flecks (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). TL of 8-55 mm (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Juveniles and Adults:

Toes are long, have large disks or pads at the end, and there is very little webbing. Virtually all individuals have a black stripe extending from the snout through the nostril, eye, and tympanum to just above the front leg (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Dorsal color is commonly tan mottled with dark brown spots, but individuals that are solid green or green with black spots are also found (Schaub and Larsen 1978; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). A “Y” shaped brown patch is usually present on the brown color morphs (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Ventral color is creamy white. SVL of 12-49 mm (Gaudin 1965; Werner et al. 1998).

Similar Species:

With the exception of boreal chorus frogs, adults of all the other frogs and toads in Montana have webbing between their hind toes. With the exception of boreal chorus frogs, the eyes of the tadpoles of all the other frogs and toads in Montana do not stick out beyond the body outline when viewed from above. The geographic range of boreal chorus frogs does not overlap with the geographic range of Pacific treefrogs (see sections on the distribution).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Usually not found far from forested habitats (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Adults are freeze tolerant and are presumed to overwinter in underground rodent burrows, underneath thick vegetation or debris or in the crevices of rocks and logs (Brattstrom and Warren 1955; Croes and Thomas 2000). Adults and juveniles feed on a variety of arthropods, but mostly rely on smaller insects (Brattstrom and Warren 1955; Johnson and Bury 1965). Breeding takes place in April and May in shallow, warm, fishless waters which may or may not have emergent vegetation (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Females deposit eggs on emergent vegetation at depths usually less than 20 centimeters in ponds that do not have a closed canopy (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Eggs usually hatch in 10 to 14 days and tadpoles metamorphose in two or three months during mid summer (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Tadpoles feed on algae, diatoms, detritus, and pollen (Kupferberg et al. 1994; Wagner 1986). Individuals are known to use terrestrial habitats several hundred meters away from their breeding pond and are known to travel as much as 1,000 meters in order to return to a breeding site they have been removed from (Brattstrom and Warren 1955; Jameson 1956, 1957). In northwestern Montana an individual was found at 1,456 meters (4,774 ft) elevation more than 3.25 kilometers from the nearest breeding site (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Status and Conservation

Pacific treefrogs are commonly heard calling, and larvae are commonly found, in standing water bodies at lower elevations north of the Missoula and Mineral County lines and west of the Mission, Swan, and Livingston Mountain Ranges. However, they appear to be present in only a

few isolated populations at the southern end of Bitterroot Valley near Lake Como, at several locations around the Blackfoot River between Missoula and the junction of the Clearwater River and around the upper Clark Fork River between Missoula and Drummond. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include all the general risk factors described above with the exception of harvest and commerce. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of Pacific treefrogs include the following. (1) The eggs (Licht 1969) and larvae (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.) of Pacific treefrogs are readily eaten by a number of trout species and fish may be expected to exclude treefrogs from habitats they occupy through predation. In the Palouse region of northern Idaho Monello and Wright (1999) found the presence of Pacific treefrogs to be highly negatively correlated with the presence of a variety of fish species, including largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and goldfish. Bradford (1989) found that Pacific treefrogs were not found in any of the 123 lakes where trout have been introduced for 173 lakes examined in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Similarly, Yoon (1977) found that meadow pools occupied by trout were rarely if ever occupied by Pacific treefrogs or other amphibians in the Sierra Nevada. (2) Jameson (1956) reported that he felt that exotic bullfrogs had excluded Pacific treefrogs from several breeding sites and found that where bullfrogs were common in the Willamette valley that treefrog choruses, egg masses, or larvae were never found. Kupferberg (1993) also documented the decline of Pacific treefrog populations behind the invasion front of exotic bullfrogs. Kupferberg (1997) found that bullfrogs significantly reduced growth and larval survival of treefrogs. Finally, Kupferberg (1994) observed that when bullfrogs replaced native treefrogs, native garter snakes were not able to forage on the larger bullfrog tadpoles as efficiently as they had on the native treefrogs. (3) Johnson (1980) found that when three week old Pacific treefrog tadpoles were exposed to the insecticides temephos, fenthion, methyl parathion, chlorpyrifos, and malathion for 24 hours at lower concentrations than are applied in the field for mosquito control they became thermally stressed at lower temperatures than tadpoles in a control group. Furthermore, tadpoles exposed to methyl parathion at 100 ppb or malathion at 500 ppb reduced their activity levels compared to tadpoles in the control group, possibly reducing their foraging efficiency and growth and increasing the time required to reach metamorphosis. Also, as has been noted by other studies, Schuytema et al. (1995) found that two pesticides containing the active ingredient Guthion had very different effects on Pacific treefrog larvae because of the presence of different “inactive” ingredients in the pesticide formulation. Tadpoles were 5 times more sensitive to one formulation than another because of the differences in “inactive” ingredients. The relationship of the inactive and active ingredients in these pesticides to commonly applied pesticides in Montana is not known, but it is likely that both pesticides and herbicides may represent lethal and/or sublethal threats to Pacific treefrog populations. (4) A number of studies in the western United States have reported rear limb deformities in Pacific treefrogs (Hebard and Brunson 1963; Reynolds and Stephens 1984; Johnson 1999). Hebard and Brunson (1963) found rear limb deformities in 20-30 percent of metamorphosing frogs at a pond in the Flathead Valley in the late 1950s and early 1960s. More recently hind limb deformities have been found at the same site and appear to be the result of infection with the nematode parasite *Ribeiroia* which has been found to be responsible for limb deformities in a number of amphibians throughout the western United States (Johnson 1999; Pieter Johnson, Claremont McKenna College, pers. comm.). Deformities apparently result from the amphibian larvae’s response to the mechanical perturbation of the cysts the parasites form after they burrow through the larvae’s body wall because mechanical implants of resin beads result in almost identical deformities (Sessions and

Ruth 1990; Johnson et al. 1999) Animals that breed in ponds, including the one reported by Hebard and Brunson (1963) and recently revisited, which are eutrophic as a result of organic inputs from livestock or agricultural activities may support high numbers of planorbid snails (the first host of *Ribeiroia*), thereby increasing the rate of parasite infection and deformities (Johnson 1999). (5) Several studies have found that Pacific treefrog embryos seem to be particularly resilient to exposure to ambient and enhanced UV-B radiation levels, apparently as a result of the presence of high levels of photolyase, an enzyme that is known to repair UV-B damage to DNA (Blaustein et al. 1994; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1995; Davis et al. 1996; Hays et al. 1996; Ovaska 1997; Anzalone et al. 1998; Blaustein et al. 1998). However, lab studies have shown that tadpoles and metamorphs that are chronically exposed to enhanced UV radiation have deformities and suffer higher mortality rates than those shielded from UV radiation or exposed to ambient levels of UV radiation (Hays et al. 1996; Ovaska 1997). (6) Pacific treefrog embryos are apparently less likely than other amphibians to be infected and suffer mortality from the fungus *Saprolegnia ferox* because of their habit of laying eggs in small isolated clumps rather than in communal masses (Kiesecker and Blaustein 1997). (7) Bradford et al. (1994) found that the LC₅₀ pH for Pacific treefrog embryos and hatchlings exposed for 7 days averaged 4.3 and that pH levels greater than or equal to 5.0 had no significant lethal or sublethal effects. (8) Weitzel and Panik (1993) reported that feral house cats either preyed on or mauled a number of Pacific treefrogs.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of harvest and commerce.
 2. Additional surveys are needed in order to determine whether they are present in the valley of the North Fork of the Flathead River, in the Whitefish Mountain Range, or in the Garnet Mountain Range between populations that have been documented on the Blackfoot and upper Clark Fork Rivers.
 3. Government personnel and private citizens should be educated on the impacts of exotic warm water fishes and bullfrogs on Pacific treefrogs and other native amphibians and should be given suggestions on how to promote the persistence of native amphibians.
 4. Removal of exotic warm water fishes and/or bullfrogs should be considered in areas that appear to be key habitats that ensure the survival of local sets of populations. This may be particularly important for isolated populations at the southern end of the Bitterroot Valley and populations just east of Missoula. If fish removal can not be accomplished the impacts of these exotic species may be mitigated by constructing ephemeral water bodies that treefrogs can breed and metamorphose in, but exotic fish and bullfrogs cannot overwinter in.
 5. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.
- The population dynamics, habitat use, migration distance, and dispersal distance of adults are almost completely unknown in the region and should be investigated relative to timber harvest and fire management activities.

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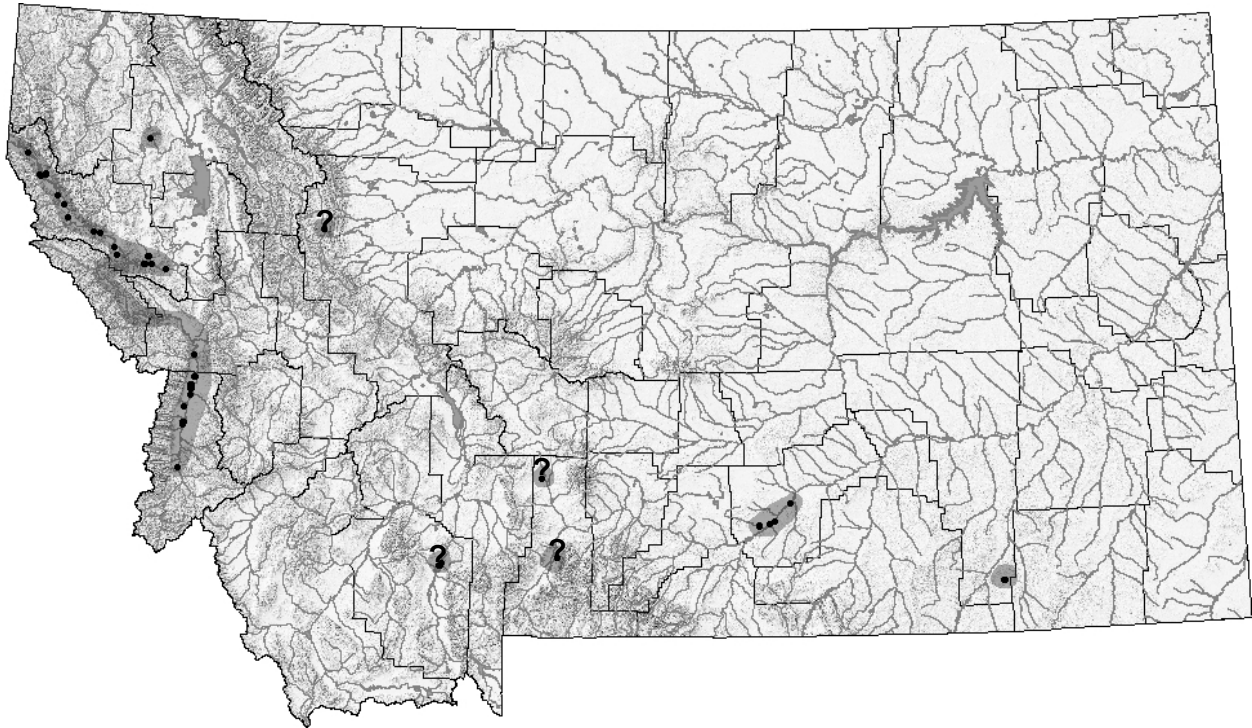
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American Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>

EXOTIC SPECIES



Distribution/Taxonomy

The bullfrog is recognized as a distinct species with a native range east of a line extending from northwest Wisconsin to south central Texas (Bury and Whelan 1984; Wiese 1990). However, they have now been widely introduced throughout the western United States and around the world at elevations that are typically lower than 1,900 M (6,234 ft) (Bury and Whelan 1984). They were first introduced in Montana sometime prior to 1968 and have now been documented with an almost continuous distribution in the valley bottoms along the Bitterroot River downstream of Darby, the Clark Fork River downstream of Missoula, and the Flathead River downstream of Dixon (Black 1969a, 1969b; Werner and Reichel 1994; Reichel 1995a; Hendricks and Reichel 1996b; Werner et al. 1998; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). In addition reproducing populations have been reported in Laurel, Billings, and Fort Peck, and individual adults have been reported in Helena, Belgrade, near Silver City northwest of Helena, near Lake Koocanusa near the Canadian border and in Carter County.

Maximum Elevation

1,203 m (3,946 ft) in Flathead County (Werner et al. 2004).

Identification

Eggs:

Deposited in a thin film, a few eggs thick, containing from 3,000 to 47,840 eggs, and spread out over a large surface area (Howard 1983; McAuliffe 1978 as cited in Bury and Whelan 1984; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Each ovum is black above, whitish below, and is surrounded by a single jelly layer (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Ovum diameters are 1.2-1.7 mm, but, total egg

diameters, including the jelly layer, are 6.4-10.4 mm (Livezey and Wright 1947).

Larvae:

Tadpoles smaller than approximately a TL of 25 mm are black with transverse gold bands on the dorsal side of the head and body and with a patch of gold ventrally (Altig 1970; Corkran and Thoms 2006). The body and tail musculature of larger tadpoles are olive green to yellow in base color with flecks of yellow and numerous round black dots (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The tail fins of larger tadpoles are clear to yellow in base color with flecks of yellow and round dots and flecks of black (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The ventral body surface of larger tadpoles is creamy white to bright yellow (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). TL of 3–178 mm (Corkran and Thoms 2006; Wright and Wright 1949).

Juveniles and Adults:

A fold of skin extends from the back of the eye, over the tympanum, down to the front leg. The tympanum is approximately the same size as the eye in females, but is much larger than the eye in males. Dorsal base color varies from pale green to dark olive green with small dark spots (usually on smaller individuals) or dark mottling (usually on larger individuals) (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Ventral color is cream to bright yellow with gray to dark olive green mottling usually present but giving way to a solid bright yellow throat patch in males (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). SVL of 39-220 mm and weighing up to 908 grams (Lutterschmidt et al. 1996; Thomas and Wogan 1999; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Similar Species:

Adult northern leopard frogs and Columbia spotted frogs both have tympanums smaller than their eyes, have white stripes extending from the tip of their snout to their front leg, and lack the fold of skin extending from the back of the eye, over the tympanum, down to the front leg. Larval northern leopard frogs and Columbia spotted frogs are smaller, do not have a creamy yellow ventral color, and do not have round black dots on their dorsal surface and tail musculature. Northern leopard frogs and Columbia spotted frogs lay their eggs soon after snow melt in the spring and their egg masses are round or globular. See sections on distribution to identify possible regions of co-occurrence of bullfrogs and Columbia spotted frogs or northern leopard frogs.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Bullfrogs are highly aquatic and appear to be mostly limited to warmer permanent water bodies with abundant emergent and/or aquatic vegetation (Giermakowski 1998; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Individuals are rarely found more than a few meters from the edge of the water (Raney 1940; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). So far they seem to have been unable to invade colder waters and high elevations in Montana, but there is some evidence that they may be adapting to colder water beaver ponds at some localities (Nussbaum et al. 1983; Werner and Plummer 1995). Adults feed on a variety of invertebrates and vertebrates and may frequently cannibalize smaller individuals (Bury and Whelan 1984; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.; see below). Adults and larvae overwinter in shallow standing or flowing permanent waters on the bottom's surface (Stinner et al. 1994). Breeding takes place in warmer weather from late June through late August and females deposit eggs in a thin layer on the surface of warmer waters (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Eggs subsequently sink onto submerged vegetation and hatch in three to five days (Bury and

Whelan 1984) and tadpoles overwinter. In Montana tadpoles have been found to overwinter once and metamorphose the following summer when in warmer or more ephemeral waters or overwinter twice, so that two larval cohorts are present, in cooler or more permanent waters (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Tadpoles feed on a variety of algae and bacteria, are commonly coprophagous, and may feed on eggs and smaller tadpoles (Steinwascher 1978; Ehrlich 1979; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1997). Tadpoles are commonly found with predatory fish because they are apparently not very palatable or nutritious (Lewis et al. 1961; Kirk 1967; Kruse and Francis 1977; Kats et al. 1988). Furthermore, tadpoles release chemicals that have actually been shown to inhibit reproduction in some fish (Boyd 1975). Adults typically do not move more than a few hundred meters within a season and show strong homing abilities when displaced (McAtee 1921; Raney 1940; Durham and Bennett 1963; Currie and Bellis 1969). However individuals have been known to move up to 2.8 kilometers and have been found in temporary pools up to 1.6 kilometers from permanent water (Ingram and Raney 1943; Willis et al. 1956; Hammerson 1999).

Status and Impacts on Native Species

In Montana they have been documented with an almost continuous distribution in the valley bottoms along the Bitterroot River downstream of Darby, the Clark Fork River downstream of Missoula, and the Flathead River downstream of Dixon (Hendricks and Reichel 1996b; Werner and Reichel 1996; Werner et al. 1998). In addition reproducing populations have been reported in Laurel, Billings, and Fort Peck, and individual adults have been reported in Helena, Belgrade, near Silver City northwest of Helena, and near Lake Koocanusa near the Canadian border. The impetus for bullfrog introduction in the western United States and in Montana seems largely to be due to their use as a recreational hunting and food item, apparently, in some cases, as a result of native frogs having already declined because of human hunting and consumption (Bury and Whelan 1984; Jennings and Hayes 1985). Unfortunately, bullfrogs continue to be introduced into new sites from source populations in and outside of Montana (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.) despite the fact that unauthorized introduction or transplantation of wildlife into the natural environment is prohibited by Montana law (Levell 1995; MCA 87-5-711). Bullfrogs represent a major predation and competition threat to native amphibians and other vertebrate and invertebrate species. Bullfrogs have been implicated in the declines of a number of amphibian species throughout the western United States and around the world (Dumas 1966; Black 1969a; Moyle 1973; Hammerson 1982, 1999; Bury and Whelan 1984; Hayes and Jennings 1988; Schwalbe and Rosen 1988; Kupferberg 1994; Lanoo et al. 1994; Arano et al. 1995; Rosen et al. 1995; Stebbins and Cohen 1995; Kupferberg 1997; Lawler et al. 1999; however, see Hayes and Jennings 1986; and Corn 1994). All 3 life history stages of amphibians may be subject to direct predation by adult bullfrogs (e.g., Korschgen and Baskett 1963; Carpenter and Morrison 1973; Bury and Whelan 1984; Clarkson and DeVos 1986; Werner et al. 1995). Additionally, both the eggs and larvae of native amphibians may be preyed upon by larval bullfrogs (e.g., Ehrlich 1979; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1997). Furthermore, egg, larval and adult amphibians are also likely to be indirectly effected by the threat of predation due to (1) adult avoidance of oviposition sites where predators are present (e.g., Resetarits and Wilbur 1989), (2) decreased larval foraging as a result of competition or staying in refuges to avoid predators (e.g., Kiesecker 1997; Kiesecker and Blaustein 1998), and (3) decreased adult foraging and growth rates as a result of avoiding areas with bullfrogs. Native amphibian larvae or adults may also be subject to chemically mediated interference competition (e.g., Petranka 1989; Griffiths et al. 1993) or exploitative

competition for resources (e.g., Kupferberg 1997). Finally, native predators such as garter snakes that are dependent on larval or adult amphibians as a food source may also be impacted as a result of the loss of native amphibian larvae and the presence of larger bullfrog tadpoles and adults that they are unable to efficiently forage on (e.g., Kupferberg 1994). In addition to impacts on native amphibians, bullfrogs are known to prey on a variety of invertebrates (Carpenter and Morrison 1973) and vertebrates including young waterfowl, passerine birds, warm and cold water fishes, crayfish, snails, shrews, mice, bats, turtles, muskrat, lizards, young alligators, garter snakes, rattlesnakes, and a variety of plant matter (Korschgen and Moyle 1955; Lewis 1962; Korschgen and Baskett 1963; Black 1969a, Tyler and Hoestenbach 1979; Bury and Whelan 1984; Clarkson and DeVos 1986; Schwalbe and Rosen 1988; Stuart 1995; Crayon 1998). The current impact of bullfrogs on the native herpetofauna in Montana is not fully known. Black (1969a) reported that bullfrogs seemed to be having a negative impact on northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*) and Columbia spotted frog (*Rana luteiventris*) populations in the Bitterroot Valley with the disappearance of some northern leopard frog populations apparently occurring at that time. However, northern leopard frog populations have now been extirpated from virtually all of their former range in western Montana so it is unlikely that bullfrogs were responsible for their declines unless they acted as a vector for disease. Native long-toed salamanders, Columbia spotted frogs, Pacific treefrogs, painted turtles, and western terrestrial and common garter snakes appear not to have suffered widespread extirpation as a result of bullfrog introduction and many of these species are known to have breeding populations that are syntopic with breeding populations of bullfrogs at a few localities where fish have not been introduced in Ravalli and Sanders Counties (Werner and Plummer 1995; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Corn and Hendricks (1998) found a number of invertebrates in the stomachs of 21 bullfrogs at Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, and found only one vertebrate, an unidentified fish. Thus, while bullfrogs may be responsible for local declines or extirpations from isolated breeding sites they do not appear to have caused widespread declines of the native amphibians. However, this does not mean that they are currently having no impact or will not cause extirpations of amphibians, invertebrates, or other vertebrates as they become more widespread.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Additional surveys are needed in the areas surrounding known or reported sites of introduction across the state, especially in eastern Montana.
2. The rate of spread of all bullfrog populations should be monitored in conjunction with native amphibian populations in the area in order to identify the impacts of bullfrogs.
3. The impacts of bullfrogs on egg, larval, and adult life history stages should be thoroughly examined using field and laboratory experiments.
4. The public should be educated on the possible impacts of bullfrogs on native communities and be made aware of the fact that it is illegal to introduce them into the wild in Montana.
5. Where possible, bullfrog populations should be removed. Removal may be accomplished by altering habitats from permanent waters that support exotic bullfrogs, fish, and aquatic weeds to ephemeral habitats that support native species. Removal may also be accomplished by surrounding waterbodies with a drift fence and subsequently draining the water body in the late fall after bullfrogs have moved into overwintering sites.
6. Individuals can then either be captured by hand or left to dessicate and/or freeze.
The Montana state legislature could further prohibit the introduction of bullfrogs by

designating them a species that is detrimental to Montana's native flora and fauna (Levell 1995; MCA 87-5-712).

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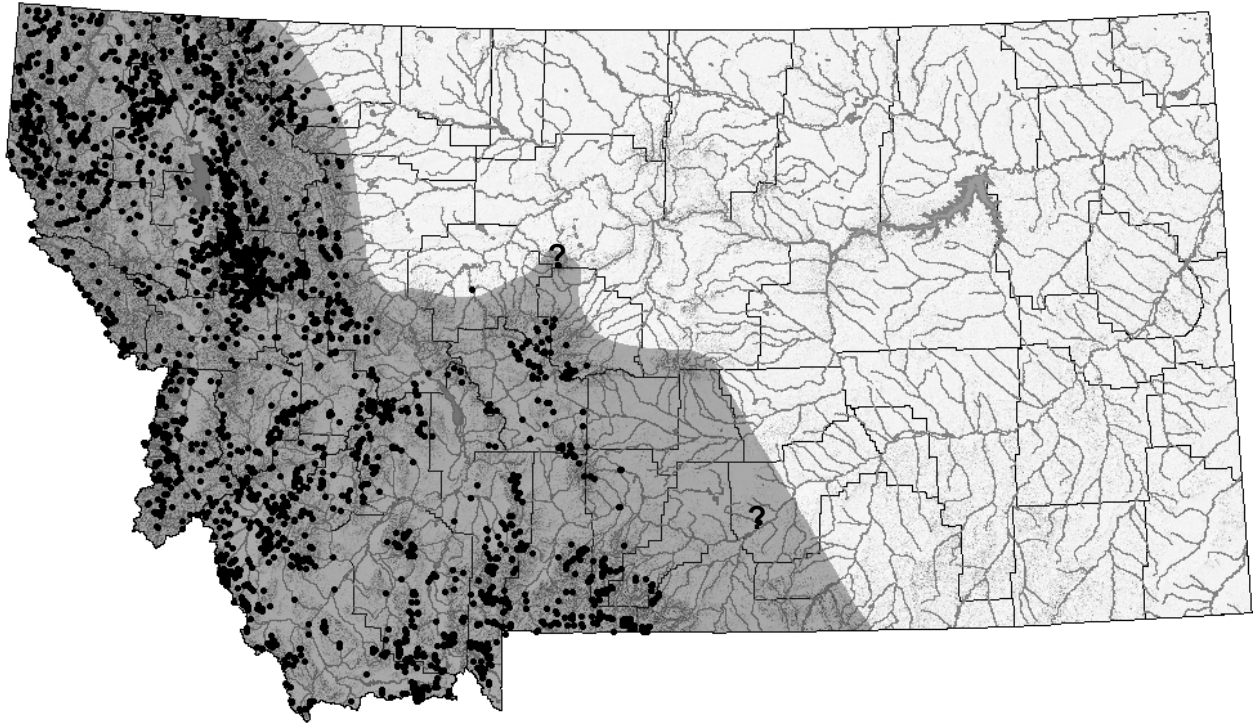
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Columbia Spotted Frog (*Rana luteiventris*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Based on allozyme and morphological evidence the Columbia spotted frog, *Rana luteiventris*, is currently recognized as a distinct species with a more or less continuous distribution along the Northern Rocky Mountains from the southwestern Yukon to central Idaho and with isolated populations located in the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming, and at isolated springs and mountain tops in Utah, Nevada, Idaho, and Oregon (Green et al. 1996; Green et al. 1997; Reaser 2000). However, the species' taxonomy may require future division into three or more subspecies or weakly differentiated full species in order to adequately represent the genetic differentiation of glacial relict populations that are isolated in several portions of Utah and Nevada, (Green et al. 1997; David Bos, Brigham Young University, pers. comm.). If future taxonomic subdivisions are made all populations north of south central Idaho would likely be the same species or subspecies (Green et al. 1997). Across their range Columbia spotted frogs are found at elevations up to 3,050 M (10,000 ft) (Stebbins 2003).

Maximum Elevation

2,947 m (9,670 ft) in Park County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are laid in a single grapefruit sized globular mass and are usually laid communally with a few to more than a hundred other egg masses (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Egg masses contain from 308 to 2,403 eggs per mass ($X = 983$, $SD = 348$, $N=30$ for completely counted egg masses at 8 low elevation sites in northwest Montana) (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Each ovum is black above and laterally, cream to white at the very bottom, and is surrounded by two jelly layers

(Svihla 1935; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Ovum diameters are 2-3 mm (Svihla 1935; Morris and Tanner 1969; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Total egg diameters, including the jelly layers, are usually 10-12 mm, but may vary from 8 to 21 mm (Svihla 1935; Turner 1958; Morris and Tanner 1969; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Larvae:

Body and tail musculature are mottled with light and dark brown spots, black spots, and flecks of metallic gold on a light tan to dark brown background (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The ventral body surface is pale yellow and often has a metallic copper sheen toward the edges (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The tail is about twice the length of the body and the dorsal and ventral tail fins are clear to yellowish with flecks of black and metallic gold. TL of 7-90 (Svihla 1935; Wishard 1977; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Juveniles and Adults:

A white to yellowish stripe extends from the tip of the snout laterally underneath the eye to just above the front limb. Dorsal base color varies from light tan to reddish or dark green with small black spots that are irregular in outline and usually have a light spot in their center (Turner 1959a). At higher elevations large adults are often a reddish brown base color dorsally. Ventral color is white to cream in all individuals, but larger animals are usually salmon in color on their thighs and in some individuals the salmon color extends from the feet to the middle of the belly with patches on the throat as well (Turner 1959a; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). SVL of 17-90 mm (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Similar Species:

Adult northern leopard frogs lack red or salmon color on their ventral surface and their dorsal surface has large, oval shaped, black spots that are regular in outline and are surrounded with a white halo. Adult bullfrogs lack the white to yellowish stripe on the lateral portion of the snout, have tympanums that are the same size or larger than their eye, and have a fold of skin extending from the back of their eye, over their tympanum, down to their front leg. Larval northern leopard frogs have tails that are less than twice their body length, do not have large flecks of black on their body or tail, and lack a metallic copper sheen on the lateral edges of their ventral surfaces. Larval bullfrogs have a bright to creamy yellow ventral surface, have perfectly round black dots on their dorsal surface and tail musculature, and attain much larger sizes. Northern leopard frog egg diameters are approximately one-half those of Columbia spotted frogs because their jelly envelopes are much smaller (see descriptions) and their egg masses are usually attached underwater (Ross et al. 1994). Bullfrog eggs are laid in the middle of the summer and are spread out in a thin layer over the surface or bottom of a pond rather than a globular mass. See sections on distribution to identify possible regions of co-occurrence of spotted frogs and northern leopard frogs or bullfrogs.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Spotted frogs are normally highly aquatic and are usually not found far from the marshy edges of ponds and lakes or the algae covered pools of springs or streams. However, they commonly bask and forage outside the water several meters from the waters edge (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Adults feed on a variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates (Moore and Strickland 1955; Turner 1959b; Miller 1978), but may commonly cannibalize smaller individuals as well (Pilliod

1999). Adults overwinter underwater in larger permanent water bodies or in springs or streams (Turner 1960; Patla 1997) and may move throughout the winter to areas of higher oxygen concentration (Evelyn Bull, USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station, pers. comm.). Individuals may aestivate in mud under rocks in extremely dry conditions (Ross et al. 1999). Breeding occurs from mid March to mid June depending on snow melt, temperature and elevation (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Females deposit egg masses communally in shallow waters (usually no more than 10-15 centimeters deep) with emergent vegetation (usually sedges), but egg masses are usually not attached to vegetation (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Eggs usually hatch in 5 to 21 days and tadpoles metamorphose in 8 to 16 weeks during mid summer to late fall depending on elevation and water and air temperatures (Turner 1958; Morris and Tanner 1969; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Tadpoles feed on a variety of algae as well as detritus, bacteria, and the remains of other dead tadpoles (Burke 1933; Morris and Tanner 1969). Adults typically do not move more than 50 meters within a season (Hollenbeck 1974; Patla 1997), but may move up to 1.5 kilometers to a seasonal breeding, foraging, or overwintering site (Engle 2000) and are known to disperse up to 6 or 7 kilometers (Reaser 1996a; Janice Engle, Boise State University, pers. comm.; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Status and Conservation

Columbia spotted frogs are the most common frog in the mountains and mountain valleys of western Montana and can be expected to be found in the majority of water bodies that contain emergent vegetation and do not have fish or bullfrogs. However, their presence and/or status in the Big Snowy, Highwood, and Bighorn Mountains is uncertain. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species in Montana are likely to include grazing, fire and fire management activities, nonindigenous species and their management, development of water impoundments, and habitat fragmentation, all as described above. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of Columbia spotted frogs include the following. (1) In 1993, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service found that isolated "distinct population segments" of Columbia spotted frogs (at the time they were still known as spotted frogs *Rana pretiosa*) throughout Utah, Nevada and southern Idaho were warranted for listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, but that their listing was precluded by other species with higher priorities for listing (USFWS 1993). Several mechanisms of decline have been proposed for the isolated populations of Columbia spotted frogs in Utah, Nevada, and southern Idaho (Koch et al. 1996). Turner (1962a) reported on the decline of Columbia spotted frogs in Nevada in the early and mid 1900s because of intensive water utilization for irrigation, and the introduction of bass and bullfrogs. Thirty-five years later Reaser (1996b, 1997, 2000) reported on further population declines in Nevada and attributed declines to alteration of natural hydrologic regimes for irrigation and livestock watering, livestock grazing, loss of beaver, and introduction of exotic bullfrogs and warm and cold water fishes. Hovingh (1993) noted that the following as factors that have contributed to the decline of Columbia spotted frog populations in the Wasatch Mountains and Bonneville basin in Utah: (a) habitat loss and fragmentation by highways, dams, reservoirs, urbanization, and the loss of natural flood disturbances because of water diversions and the channeling of rivers; (b) livestock grazing in riparian and wetland habitats; and (c) introduction of raccoons, bullfrogs, crayfish, bass, and trout. For a population inhabiting an isolated set of springs in Utah Cuellar (1994) reported that all ponds used by cattle had dark reddish water as a result of dung eutrophication, and lacked any aquatic vegetation, invertebrates, or frogs. Ross et al. (1999) found crushed

individuals at the bottom of the hoof prints of cattle and reported that a decline in habitat appeared to be at least in part due to cattle grazing in the riparian areas. The construction of a dam on the Provo River in north central Utah extirpated many populations as a result of flooding of habitats (Wilkinson 1996). Populations in southwest Idaho are threatened by habitat loss as a result of livestock grazing impacts on riparian areas (Munger in Koch et al. 1996). It is likely that many of the known and postulated mechanisms of decline for the isolated southern populations pose threats to the viability of populations of Columbia spotted frogs in Montana.

(2) Exotic warm and cold water fish have been implicated in the declines and losses of local Columbia spotted frog populations in Montana, Oregon, and Idaho. In Glacier National Park Marnell (1997) reported that fish were found within the same general wetland complexes in only 16 of 68 (23%) of the sites where frogs were found. Furthermore, at the sites where spotted frogs were found with fish they were almost always found in satellite pools isolated from the fish or in densely vegetated sloughs. With a few exceptions this same general pattern of co-occurrence only where isolated pools, dense vegetation, or some other physical barrier from the fish exists has been observed in the Bitterroot and Cabinet Mountains in Montana (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). On the Palouse Prairie in northern Idaho Monello and Wright (1999) found spotted frogs to be excluded from all water bodies containing fish, including those containing gold fish. Similarly, although Columbia spotted frogs cooccurred with fish at 69% of 55 lakes surveyed in the Big Horn Crags in central Idaho, frogs only successfully reproduced at 1 (2%) of these lakes (Pilliod et al. in Koch et al. 1996). Thus, stocked lakes in this region appeared to be population “sinks” and persistence in a basin may be dependent on the number and location of stocked sites (Pilliod et al. in Koch et al. 1996). In northeast Oregon Bull and Hayes (2000) found the numbers of metamorphosed frogs at a site was inversely correlated with the presence of longnose dace and rainbow trout.

(3) Bullfrogs, which were introduced into Montana sometime prior to 1968, have apparently extirpated Columbia spotted frogs from a number of sites along the Bitterroot, lower Flathead, and lower Clark Fork Rivers (Black 1969a, 1969b; Giermakowski 1998; Werner et al. 1998; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). However, sizable Columbia spotted frog populations have been found in close proximity with bullfrogs on the floodplain of the Bitterroot River near spring brooks. Spring brooks provide summer habitat and overwintering sites for Columbia spotted frogs which are apparently too cold for bullfrogs (Cavallo 1997; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.) and, therefore, provide important refuges for Columbia spotted frogs around the flood plains of the mountain valleys.

(4) Manipulation of water levels in water impoundments can result in direct and indirect mortality of amphibian larvae and eggs. For example, during the summer of 1998, fluctuating water levels in Cabinet Gorge Reservoir in northwest Montana led to the dessication of Columbia spotted frog eggs and larvae when water levels dropped for power generation (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

(5) Kirk (1988) found a large number of dead adults in Oregon as the result of spraying with DDT (0.65-0.72 kg DDT/ha) to control Douglas fir tussock moth. Subsequent examination of the tissues of the dead frogs showed them to be heavily contaminated with DDT and its analogs relative to live individuals collected at the same site.

(6) In northeast Oregon Bull and Hayes (2000) found that the numbers of egg masses, metamorphosed frogs, and adult frogs found at grazed and ungrazed ponds did not differ.

(7) Patla (1997; 1998) and Patla and Peterson (1999) reported declines in a population in Yellowstone National Park as the result of highway construction and construction of an underground water pumping system which changed migratory habitat and the local hydrological regime, respectively.

(8) Lefcort et al. (1998) reported reduced survival of Columbia spotted frog larvae when exposed to experimental chambers with heavy metal contaminated soils from a

EPA Superfund site in northern Idaho. Larval survival was 0.875 in controls, 0.20 in heavily contaminated soil and 0.175 in less contaminated soil. Thus, average survival in the superfund soils represented an almost 80 percent reduction in larval survival. Furthermore, they found that exposure to most heavy metal contaminants had sublethal effects in that they greatly reduced the ability of tadpoles to respond to chemical cues from a fish predator. (9) Blaustein et al. (1999) found that spotted frogs had relatively high levels of photolyase, an enzyme that is known to repair UV-B damage to DNA, as compared with other amphibian species. Furthermore, at a number of field sites, hatching success was unaffected by exposure to ambient levels of UV-B. Davis et al. (1996) found that embryo survival was above 80% for those exposed to ambient or no UV-B radiation, but dropped to 56% in those exposed to UV-B radiation enhanced to 15-30% above ambient levels at mid day. Furthermore, few of the larvae survived when exposed to the enhanced UV-B radiation. (10) Reinking et al. (1980) found that aldosterone levels in blood plasma were over three times higher in animals held in captivity for three weeks than animals in the wild, indicating that animals face high levels of stress when held in captivity and possibly when being handled in the wild. (11) Historic loss of beaver may be causing gradual habitat loss in some mountain ranges in Montana as sites fill in with sediments and are no longer being replaced (Grant Hokit, Carroll College, pers. comm.; Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above with the exception of harvest and commerce.
2. Documentation of their presence is poor in the area between the east front of the Rockies and the Swan Mountain Range south of Glacier Park, in the area between the Gallatin Range the Big Hole Valley and the Elkorn Mountains, in the Big Belt Mountains, and on the Absaroka-Beartooth Plateau. In addition their presence in the Big Snowy, Highwood, and Bighorn Mountains is uncertain.
3. Local and landscape wide impacts of fish introductions should be examined in order to develop fish stocking guidelines that will allow for the persistence of individual populations and connectivity between sets of local populations or metapopulations. Fish stocking at both high and low elevation sites should only be carried out where fish have previously been stocked and in areas where they are contained in a limited number of water bodies (i.e., introduction in one lake in a basin will not result in the colonization of other lakes in the basin).
4. Fish removal should be considered in areas that appear to be key habitats that ensure the survival of local sets of populations.
5. The public should be educated on the possible impacts of bullfrogs on native communities and be made aware of the fact that it is illegal to introduce them into the wild in Montana.
6. Where possible, bullfrog populations should be removed. Removal may be accomplished by altering habitats from permanent waters that support exotic bullfrogs, fish, and aquatic weeds to ephemeral habitats that support native species. Removal may also be accomplished by surrounding waterbodies with a drift fence and subsequently draining the water body in the late fall after bullfrogs have moved into overwintering sites. Individuals can then either be captured by hand or left to desiccate and/or freeze.
7. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.

8. In areas where livestock grazing is common, studies of the habitat use and population dynamics of Columbia spotted frogs relative to grazing impacts should be conducted.
9. The impacts of the loss of beaver, the creation of water impoundments with fluctuating water levels, and fish introductions, may be mitigated by the creation of ephemeral pools.

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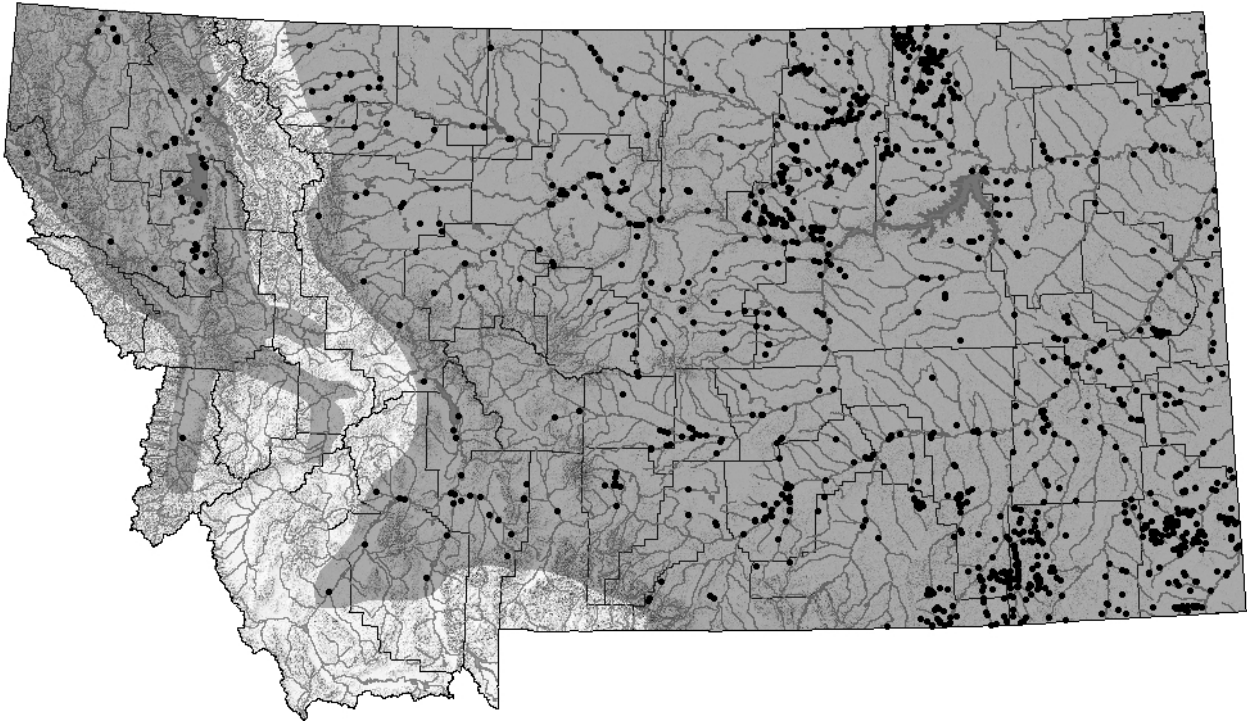
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Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Rana pipiens has a complex taxonomic history, but is now recognized as a distinct species that historically ranged from Newfoundland and northern Alberta in the north to the Great Lakes region, the desert Southwest, and the Great Basin in the south (Pace 1974; Dunlap and Platz 1981; Hillis 1988). In addition a number of isolated populations historically existed in the Pacific Northwest and California (Stebbins 2003). Across this range populations have been documented at elevations up to 3,350 M (11,000 ft) (Hammerson 1999). In Montana they have historically been documented across the eastern plains and in many of the mountain valleys on both sides of the Continental Divide. Unfortunately, over the last few decades northern leopard frog populations have undergone declines and extinctions across much of the western portion of their range (Stebbins and Cohen 1995). Most northern leopard frog populations in western Montana apparently became extinct sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s when virtually no amphibian studies were being conducted in the state. Only two population centers are now known to exist in western Montana, one near Kalispell and one near Eureka (Werner et al. 1998; Kirwin Werner, Salish Kootenai College, pers. comm.). In addition, out of 47 historic sites revisited in the mid 1990s in central Montana, northern leopard frogs were only found at 9 (19%) (Reichel 1995a, 1996; Koch et al. 1996). Populations in southeastern Montana still seem to be widespread and abundant (Reichel 1995b; Hendricks and Reichel 1996; Koch et al. 1996).

Maximum Elevation

2,042 m (6,700 ft) in Judith Basin County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are laid in a single orange to grapefruit sized globular mass and are laid individually or communally in groups of up to three dozen egg masses (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Egg masses contain from 645 to 6,272 eggs ($X = 3,045$, $N = 68$ for completely counted egg masses at five sites in Colorado and Wyoming) (Corn and Livo 1989). Each ovum is black above, white below, and is surrounded by two jelly layers (Livezey and Wright 1947). Ovum diameters are approximately 1.7 mm, but total egg diameters, including the jelly layers, are approximately 5.0 mm (Livezey and Wright 1947).

Larvae:

Body and tail musculature are dark brown to olive or gray with flecks of light gold or silver and black (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The tail musculature may be pale (Corkran and Thoms 2006). The lateral body surface has a larger proportion of light gold or silver flecks and the ventral body surface is silvery white to transparent (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). The tail fin is clear to yellowish with black and light gold or silver flecks (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). TL of 5.5-100 mm (Livo 1981 as cited in Hammerson 1999; Hammerson 1999).

Juveniles and Adults:

White to cream stripes extend from the tip of the snout laterally underneath the eye to just above the base of the front limb and from just behind each eye to the base of the hind limbs (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Dorsal base color is either green or brown with large, oval shaped, black spots that are regular in outline and are surrounded with a light halo (Fogleman et al. 1980). Individuals occasionally have a blue light blue base color (Black 1969; Hammerson 1999). Ventral color is white to cream with some pinkish patches, especially on the feet (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). SVL of 18-110 mm (Nussbaum et al. 1983; Hammerson 1999).

Similar Species:

Adult Columbia spotted frogs often have red or salmon color on their ventral surface and their dorsal surface has small, irregularly shaped black spots with white or light yellow centers. Adult bullfrogs lack the white to yellowish stripe on the lateral portion of the snout, have tympanums that are the same size or larger than their eye, and have a fold of skin extending from the back of their eye, over their tympanum, down to their front leg. Larval Columbia spotted frogs have tails that are usually twice their body length, have large flecks of black on their body or tail, and often have a metallic copper sheen on the lateral edges of their ventral surfaces. Larval bullfrogs have a bright to creamy yellow ventral surface, have perfectly round black dots on their dorsal surface and tail musculature, and attain much larger sizes. Columbia spotted frog egg diameters are approximately twice those of northern leopard frogs because their jelly envelopes are much larger (see descriptions) and their egg masses are usually at the water's surface and not attached to vegetation (Ross et al. 1994). Bullfrog eggs are laid in the middle of the summer and are spread out in a thin layer over the surface or bottom of a pond rather than a globular mass. See sections on distribution to identify possible regions of co-occurrence of northern leopard frogs and Columbia spotted frogs or bullfrogs.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Northern leopard frogs are typically found in and adjacent to permanent slow moving or standing water bodies with considerable vegetation. However, they may range widely into moist meadows, grassy woodlands and even agricultural areas (Nussbaum et al. 1983). In Montana adults are found primarily in riparian habitats or on the prairies near permanent waters without tall dense vegetation (Mosiman and Rabb 1952, Black 1969, Miller 1978). Adults feed on a variety of invertebrates, but may cannibalize smaller individuals and ingest plant matter incidentally (Knowlton 1944; Moore and Strickland 1954; Whitaker 1961; Linzey 1967; Miller 1975, 1978). Adults overwinter on the bottom surface of permanent water bodies, under rubble in streams, or in underground crevices that do not freeze (Rand 1950; Emery et al. 1972; Cunjak 1986). Breeding occurs in March and April and females deposit egg masses singly or communally in waters 7-25 cm deep attached to vegetation under the water's surface (Corn and Livo 1989; Werner and Reichel 1996; Hammerson 1999). Eggs hatch in 4 to 15 days and tadpoles metamorphose in 58 to 105 days (Corn 1981; Livo 1981 as cited in Hammerson 1999). Tadpoles feed on a variety of algae as well as detritus (DeBenedictis 1974). Adults typically do not move more than 50 meters within a seasonal homerange, but may migrate several hundred to a thousand or more meters between seasonal homeranges (Dumas 1964; Dole 1965a; Dole 1965b; Dole 1967; Dole 1968). Juveniles are known to disperse up to 8.0 kilometers from their natal ponds to their adult seasonal territories (Dole 1971; Seburn et al. 1997).

Status and Conservation

Within the last twenty to twenty five years northern leopard frog populations have declined and been extirpated from large portions of the area from the western plains of Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and Alberta westward to Oregon and Washington (Roberts 1981, 1987, 1992; Corn and Fogleman 1984; Baxter and Stone 1985; Stebbins and Cohen 1995; Koch et al. 1996; Leonard and McAllister 1996; Leonard et al. 1999; Hammerson 1999). Suggested causes of declines in northern leopard frog populations in this and other areas of the country included loss of wetlands and natural hydrological regimes, introductions of game fish, mosquitofish, and bullfrogs, application of pesticides and herbicides, and drought (Roberts 1981, 1987, 1992; Corn and Fogleman 1984; Koch and Peterson 1995; Stebbins and Cohen 1995; Leonard and McAllister 1996; Leonard et al. 1999; Hammerson 1999). While it is likely that all of these factors have played a role in the decline and extirpation of local northern leopard frog populations, many of the declines and extirpations were apparently associated with regional mass mortality events between 1973 and 1982 because declines were observed in relatively pristine areas as well (Roberts 1981, 1987, 1991; 1992; Corn and Fogleman 1984; Koch and Peterson 1995). Reintroduction programs have been initiated in Alberta (Roberts 1991) and have been called for in Washington state (Leonard et al. 1999).

The same general timeline for declines is evident in western Montana. Northern leopard frog populations were encountered and found to be apparently healthy by a number of masters and doctoral degree students between 1967 and 1977 (Black 1967, 1970; Miller 1975; Anderson 1977; Daugherty et al. 1978). A student at the Salish-Kootenai College noted that while he found northern leopard frogs near Kicking Horse Reservoir on the Flathead Indian Reservation during the summer of 1980, local fisherman reported that they had noticed a definite decrease in the number of leopard frogs in the area (Ryan 1980). Very little, if any, work was conducted on amphibians in Montana in the 1980s and surveys in the 1990s failed to find northern leopard

frogs at any of the historical sites that were revisited and only found two remaining populations in all of western Montana west of the Continental Divide (Werner and Plummer 1994, 1995; Werner and Reichel 1994, 1996; Hendricks and Reichel 1996a; Koch et al. 1996; Werner et al. 1998). Furthermore, while surveys during the 1990s found them to be common east of the island mountain ranges in eastern Montana, they appeared to have been extirpated from 80% of historic localities on the northwestern plains (Reichel 1995a, 1995b; Hendricks and Reichel 1996; Koch et al. 1996; Reichel 1996b; Reichel 1997; Hendricks and Reichel 1998; Rauscher 1998; Roedel and Hendricks 1998a, 1998b; Hendricks 1999).

As a result of these findings the USFS listed the northern leopard frog as a sensitive species in all Region 1 Forests (USDAFS 1999). Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include all the risk factors described above. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of northern leopard frogs include the following. (1) In conjunction with similar observations for western toads Carey (1993) observed the disappearance of two populations of northern leopard frogs in the West Elk Mountains of Colorado between 1974 and 1982. During this period she found leopard frogs with symptoms of red-leg disease, a common bacterial infection in amphibians and fish. She hypothesized that an unidentified environmental factor had caused sublethal stress of both species, which caused immune response to be suppressed, leading to the systemic infection and death. More recently the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, which is suspected to be responsible for declines of amphibians in Australia, Central America, and the western United States has been found to have caused mass mortalities in northern leopard frog populations in southern Arizona during the summer of 1999 (Berger et al. 1998; Daszak et al. 1999, 2000; Morell 1999; Milius 1999). As was observed for declines in the late 1970's and early 1980's only metamorphosed individuals died (Morell 1999). The fungus only seems to attack keratinized tissues, so metamorphosed individuals with lots of keratinized tissues die and tadpoles with keratinized tissues only around the mouthparts survive until metamorphosis (Berger et al. 1998; Morell 1999). Furthermore, it now appears that the chytrid fungus was responsible for declines in the late 1970's and early 1980's as well because museum specimens of northern leopard frogs that were collected during these time period have now been found to have the chytrid fungus (Carey 1999; Daszak 1999; Milius 2000). Thus, the chytrid fungus may be the most likely cause of declines of northern leopard frog populations in the western United States and in western Montana in the late 1970's and early 1980's and clearly represents a threat to populations today. In support of Carey's (1993) immunosuppression hypothesis Maniero and Carey (1997) found that northern leopard frogs exposed to low temperatures (5 degrees C) significantly reduced the animal's immune response. Thus, leopard frogs may be particularly susceptible to the chytrid fungus or other pathogens when emerging in the early spring or in the late fall or winter or when faced with some other environmental stressor (Carey et al. 1999). (2) Berrill et al. (1993) found that the pyrethroid pesticides permethrin and fenvalerate did not cause significant mortality of embryos when they were exposed to commonly applied levels for 22 to 96 hours. However, tadpole growth and response to a potential predator was delayed following exposure. Berrill et al. (1994) found that the insecticide fenitrothion and the herbicides triclopyr and hexazinone had no effects on embryos, but the fenitrothion and triclopyr did kill or paralyze new hatchlings at concentrations of 2.4 to 4.8 ppm and 4.0 to 8.0 ppm, respectively. Berrill and Bertram (1997) found that northern leopard frog embryos exposed to 6 herbicides (hexazinone, triclopyr ester, triallate, trifluralin, glyphosate, and bromoxynil) and 3 insecticides (permethrin,

fenvalerate, and fenitrothion) at levels that are commonly found in areas where they are used on forests or crops in Canada hatched successfully with no unusual mortality. However, when tadpoles were exposed to the same levels they suffered partial paralysis and the authors note that they would be likely to suffer high rates of mortality. Kaplan and Overpeck (1964) and Kaplan and Glaczinski (1965) found that a variety of organophosphate and halogenated hydrocarbon pesticides caused both red and white blood cell counts to decline in adult northern leopard frogs and chronic exposures to concentrations of 1 ppm caused death in some individuals. Dial and Dial (1987) found that the aquatic herbicides diquat and paraquat did not reduce embryo survival or change hatching time when applied at concentrations of 0.1 to 2.0 ppm. However, at the same concentrations young tadpoles suffered significant mortality from both chemicals and 15 day old tadpoles suffered significant mortality from paraquat. (3) Hecnar (1995) found that acute and chronic toxic effects of ammonium nitrate were observed in northern leopard frog tadpoles at concentrations that are commonly exceeded in agricultural areas. Acute exposures to ammonium nitrate fertilizers at 20 mg/L for 96 hours resulted in 50 percent mortality and significant weight loss in those individuals that survived. Chronic exposures to 10 mg/L for 100 days resulted in significantly lower survivorship. Cameron (1940) found that well water containing 1 ppm flourine caused embryo development to slow and time to hatching to decrease. Lande and Guttman (1973) found that embryos were not affected by copper sulfate at concentrations up to 1.56 mg/liter of copper, but the LD₅₀ for tadpoles was 0.15 mg/liter and tadpole growth rates were decreased at concentrations of 0.06. (4) Hamilton (1941) found that rotenone applied at 0.1 mg/L caused mortality in larval through metamorphic life history stages of *Rana pipiens* over an 8 to 24 hour time period, respectively. Furthermore, Burress (1982) found that Pro-Noxfish applied at 5 µL/L caused substantial mortality in *Rana pipiens*. (5) Black (1969a) felt that exotic bullfrogs introduced in the Bitterroot Valley had lead to declines in northern leopard frog populations in the area. Similarly, Hammerson (1982) documented a decline in the abundance of northern leopard frogs as bullfrog numbers increased at a site in Colorado. (6) Vatnick et al. (1999) found that adult northern leopard frogs preferred a neutral pH in a choice test and found that when they were exposed to water of pH 5.5 for 10 days they suffered 72% mortality while those exposed to a pH of 7.0 suffered only 3.5% mortality. Furthermore, frogs appeared to be much more sensitive to low pH immediately after emergence from hibernation. Those exposed to a pH of 5.5 immediately after emerging from all died within 4 days while frogs exposed after they had completed breeding activities only suffered 58% mortality over a 10 day period. Freda et al. (1991) report that a pH below 4.6 causes mortality of embryos to increase significantly from controls and all embryos die when exposed to a pH of 4.2-4.5. Corn and Vertucci (1992) report an LC₅₀ of embryos at a pH of 4.5. Freda and Dunson (1985) found that tadpoles raised at a pH of 4.4 grew slower than siblings raised at a pH of 5.8. Furthermore, older tadpoles had higher survival rates at low pH than younger tadpoles. Schlichter (1981) found that sperm motility decreased below pH 6.5 and no embryos survived below a pH of 4.8. Long et al. (1995) found that low pH and UV-B acted synergistically to cause mortality in northern leopard frog embryos. Freda et al. (1990) found that at a pH below 4.8, aluminum complexed with dissolved organic carbon and became toxic to tadpoles. (7) Nash et al. (1970) found that loud noises resulted in an immobility reaction in leopard frogs. This could leave them at greater risk of mortality from traffic or heavy machinery. (8) Ankley et al. (2000) found that limb deformities were more prevalent when tadpoles were exposed to higher levels of UV-B radiation.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all of the general risk factors described above. The two populations that are known to remain in the western part of the state should thoroughly protected from the negative impacts of all management activities.
2. All historic breeding sites across the state (in western Montana in particular) should be revisited at least twice during an upcoming summer in order to identify possible changes in the short- and long-term regional status of populations.
3. A formal monitoring program should be established to detect declines and/or mechanisms behind declines for the two remnant populations west of the Continental Divide as well as for a number of randomly selected populations across the eastern plains.
4. Demographic vital rates reported in the scientific literature should be used to model the long term viability of the two populations that are known to remain in western Montana (e.g., 25, 50, and 100 years).
5. Demographic vital rate information (fecundity, life stage specific survival rates, longevity, and migration and dispersal distances) should be gathered at the two known sites in western Montana in order to better understand the population dynamics of the species and identify mechanisms of mortality for all life history stages.
6. Museum specimens collected since the 1970's should be examined for the presence of the chytrid fungus. Furthermore, because amphibians sold in pet stores may be introduced into the wild and act as vectors for pathogens, they should be examined and formally certified as free of pathogens such as the chytrid fungus.
7. The Forest Service, the state of Montana, and tribal wildlife agencies should initiate habitat improvement projects around the remaining populations in western Montana and should strongly consider initiating a captive breeding and reintroduction program at historical sites across western Montana while locally adapted source populations still exist. Prior to initiating a reintroduction program genetic studies are recommended in order to determine the genetic variation within and between the remaining populations and populations on the eastern plains and in eastern Washington so that it is made certain that source populations are themselves native. Because reintroductions of adult amphibians are often unsuccessful due to their philopatric nature and tendency to attempt to home, reintroductions may be most successful if embryos are translocated and adequate overwintering habitat is provided at the sites of reintroduction.
8. Until the lethal and sublethal impacts of commonly used fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on all amphibian life history stages present in an area are examined they should not be applied within 100 meters of waterbodies or wetlands.
9. Before piscicides are used in fish removal projects the area should be surveyed for the presence of northern leopard frog breeding, and/or eggs and tadpoles. If tadpoles are present in a site that is about to be treated, tadpoles can be netted, placed in holding tanks for a few days, and returned to the site after the piscicide has cleared.

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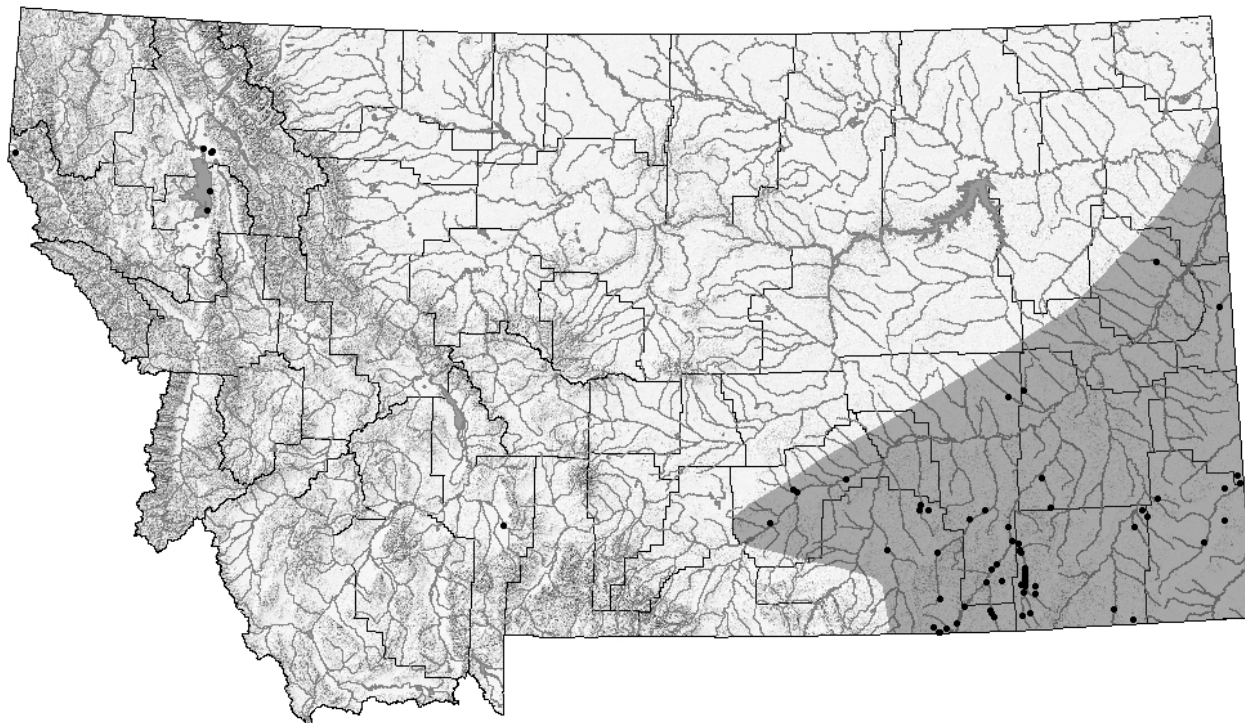
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Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



* Point observations outside of shaded native range are introduced animals/populations.

Distribution/Taxonomy

The Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) ranges along the Pacific Coast from Nova Scotia to Florida, and westerly to the Rocky Mountain front, from southeastern Manitoba to Texas and Mexico (Ernst et al. 1994). Two subspecies are recognized; the Florida Snapping Turtle (*C. serpentina osceola*) and the subspecies inhabiting Montana, the Eastern Snapping Turtle (*C. serpentina serpentina*) (Crother et al. 2008). In Montana, native populations are found from Carter County, east to Carbon and Stillwater counties, and northeasterly to McCone County. Most records are from the southeastern portion of the state in the Yellowstone River system and tributaries, especially along the Tongue River drainage. Currently, there are no confirmed Montana records from the Missouri River or its tributaries. Introduced populations exist in Flathead, Lake, Sanders, and Gallatin Counties (Maxell et al. 2003, MTNHP 2006).

Maximum Elevation

1,158 m (3,800 ft) in Big Horn County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

Snapping Turtles are large, stout turtles with an adult carapace length (CL) typically 20-35 cm (8-14 inches), but grow larger in populations of the southern United States (Degenhardt et al. 1996). Adults usually weigh 4.5-16 kilograms (10-35 lbs). However, one Montana individual found in the Redwater River reached 32 pounds (Aderhold 1980) and another Montana specimen reportedly reached 48 pounds (Werner et al. 2004). Snapping Turtles have a long tail about the

length of the carapace (dorsal shell), with three rows of distinct sawtooth-shaped projections. The plastron (ventral shell) is brown with three keels that are more easily discerned in younger individuals. In older individuals, a good portion of the carapace is usually covered with algae. The cream-yellow plastron is greatly reduced compared to other turtles, and forms a cross-like shape. It has a large head with slightly hooked upper jaw. They have long necks with tubercles on the dorsal surface. They have webbed toes and powerful claws. The anal vent of the male usually extends past the posterior edge of the carapace, whereas it is found anterior to the rim in females. Males will usually grow larger than females (Hammerson 1999).

Hatchlings:

Hatchlings are dark brown to black with conspicuous ridges on their carapace. The carapace measure 2.5-3.8 cm (1-1.5 inches) in length (Ernst et al. 1994, Werner et al. 2004).

Eggs:

Chelydra serpentina eggs white and round with and somewhat pliable. They range from 23-33 mm in length, averaging 27-28 mm.

Similar Species:

The Snapping Turtle is the only Montana turtle with a reduced plastron covering less than half of the ventral surface, keeled scutes on the carapace, and a tail approximately as long as the carapace. There is no bright orange or yellow coloration as found on the painted turtle, and their carapace is hard, unlike the soft, leathery shell of the Spiny Softshell (Black 1970, 1971, Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Habitat use by Snapping Turtles in Montana is probably similar to elsewhere in their range, but local studies are lacking and there is little qualitative information available. They have been captured or observed in backwaters along major rivers, at smaller reservoirs, and in smaller streams and creeks with permanent flowing water and sandy or muddy bottoms (Reichel 1995, Hendricks and Reichel 1996, Gates 2005, Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). They have also been observed in temporary pools along small intermittent streams near Decker, Montana (M. Gates, pers. obs.). Freshwater habitats with a soft mud bottom and with cover such as abundant aquatic vegetation or submerged brush and logs are preferred (Hammerson 1999). Although found most often in shallower water, an Ontario individual was observed by R. J. Brooks regularly diving 10 meters to the bottom of a lake (Ernst et al. 1994). Temporary ponds and reservoirs may also be occupied. Hatchlings and juveniles tend to occupy shallower sites than mature individuals in the same water bodies. They are mostly bottom dwellers, where they spend much of their time. Although highly aquatic, they may make long movements overland if their pond or marsh dries (Baxter and Stone 1985, Ernest et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999). Snapping Turtles have a high water loss gradient (0.64 grams/hour), and therefore are at risk out of water in warm or dry conditions and they rarely bask out of water. Aerial basking is more common in cooler environments in the northern portions of their range (Ernst et al. 1994) and has been observed on the Tongue River of southeastern Montana (Matt Gates, pers. obs.).

No specific migratory information for Montana is currently available. Research from other locations indicates that the Snapping Turtle may migrate up to several miles between the water bodies and nesting areas. Evidence suggests that adults may use the sun as a navigational guide during overland migrations (Ernst et al. 1994). Some may travel a few kilometers between summer range and winter hibernation sites, while others overwinter within their summer range (Brown and Brooks 1994). In Ontario, the distances traveled to nesting sites ranged from 370 to 2020 meters (mean 1053 meters), and movements were greatest from spring to mid-July (Pettit et al. 1995). Distances traveled by *C. serpentina* in South Dakota ranged from 0 to 6.05 kilometers, but averaged just 1.1 km (Hammer 1969).

In Iowa males can reach sexual maturity by their fifth year and females as early as their seventh year (Christiansen and Burken 1979). However, in some populations maturity is not reached before 15 years. The youngest mature female known from Michigan was 12 years. In Ontario the average age of first nesting ranged from 17-19 years. Virtually no reproductive data exists specific to Montana. However, Montana populations likely exhibit traits similar to those elsewhere. Warming temperatures trigger nesting behavior in females. Obbard and Brooks (1987) developed a model to predict the onset of nesting activity from temperature data in Ontario. Females may travel several kilometers to locate a suitable nest site. Obbard and Brooks (1980) reported a round trip distance of 16 km to a nest site and back (Ernst et al. 1994). Nests are usually built in open areas a hundred meters or more from water; excavated in soft sand, loam, vegetation debris, sawdust piles, and beaver and muskrat lodges. Females generally dig nests from 7-18 cm (Congdon et al. 1987, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999). In northern regions, eggs are generally deposited in late May to early June. Recorded clutch sizes range from 6 to 104, but typically 20-40 eggs are laid. Clutch size tends to increase from southerly to northerly latitudes. Eggs incubate for 55-125 days (usually 75-95) before hatching, with incubation period increasing with latitude. The sex of each hatchling is determined by each egg's temperature during a critical developmental period ("temperature dependent sex determination"). Relatively cooler temperatures produce females and warmer temperatures produce males. The sex ratio of hatchlings is commonly 1:1 (Ernst et al. 1994). Nest site selection is critical for survival of hatchlings. Eggs buried in moister substrate generally support better embryonic development and larger hatchlings, whereas eggs in drier environments (Morris et al. 1983). The incubation environment of eggs can later effect growth and viability of young Snapping Turtles (McKnight and Gutzke (1993). Bobyne and Brooks (1994) suggest incubation temperature and moisture limit the northern distribution of *C. serpentina*.

Snapping turtle diets have not been studied in Montana, but they are known to eat about anything that can be captured while foraging in the water. They eat many kinds of vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, aquatic birds, small mammals), invertebrates (insects, spiders, crustaceans, mollusks, leeches, sponges), various plants and algae, and carrion (Pell 1940, Ernst et al. 1994). Diet appears to be dependent on availability. In New York and Massachusetts, specimens collected from marshy lakes consumed 90% plant material, but individuals from small streams consumed 100% crayfish (Pell 1940). Young Snapping Turtles often search actively for food, but adults generally lie in ambush to seize their prey (Ernst et al. 1994). This species is known to eat nine orders of insects (ants, beetles, and moths the most abundant), and spiders, scorpions, ticks, and mites have been reported in the diet (Hammerson 1999).

Snapping Turtles frequently incur high rates of nest predation by various animals, particularly skunks, raccoons, foxes, bears, crows, and snakes (Congdon et al. 1987, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999). In Michigan, eggs and young typically incur 60-100% predation, primarily by raccons (Harding 1997). Temple (1987) suggest that next predation increases near habitat edges. Racoons, coyotes, river otters, bears, and often humans prey on adults; herons, bitterns, hawks, eagles, various predatory fish, and bullfrogs prey on hatchlings and juveniles (Ernst et al. 1994). Compared with other species *C. serpentina*, uses very aggressive display postures to thwart potential predators, such as facing its attacker and lifting its legs in various positons while gaping its mouth. (Dodd et al. 1975). Snapping Turtles are often parasitized by leaches (*Placobdella* spp.) and a protozoan blood parasite (*Haemogregarina balli*). An Ontario individual reportedly had 768 leaches attached (Brooks et al. 1990). Despite high rates of investation, Brown and Brooks (1994) found that these parasites do not negatively affect reproductive output. Humans are the only recorded predators in Montana (Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.).

Snapping Turtles are known to hibernate independently or in groups. They overwinter in lakes, ponds, streams, or marshes; in bottom mud, in or under submerged logs or debris, under overhanging banks, in muskrat tunnels, or in the saturated soil of pastures (Meeks and Ultsch 1990). They sometimes overwinter in shallow, anoxic water but survivorship is higher in normoxic condition. Underwater winter movements are not uncommon. In Ontario, *C. serpentina* emerged from winter dormancy when water reached about 7.5 degrees Celsuis (Obbard and Brooks 1981a, Meeks 1990, Brown and Brooks 1994).

Populations of Snapping Turtles greatly vary regionally, locally, and temporally (Froese and Burghardt 1975); therefore, population data from other states cannot be extrapolated to Montana with any accuracy. In Ontario, males occupied relatively stable, overlapping home ranges; summer ranges were 0.4 to 2.3 hectares (Galbraith et al. 1987). Also in Ontario, July to August foraging home ranges in three sites during one year were 2.3 to 18.1 hectares (means fell between 5 and 9 hectares); home range length was about 550 to 1990 meters; home range size did not vary with habitat productivity (Brown et al. 1994). In another Ontario study, home range size over a year was 1.0 to 28.4 hectares, averaging about 9 hectares for females and about 2 to 3 hectares for males (Pettit et al. 1995). Densities in marshes of South Dakota reached one per 2 acres (Hammer 1969).

Egg survival is usually low, not more than 0.22, and adult survival generally high, over 0.90. A population in Ontario, Canada, was characterized as stable, with adult female annual survivorship greater than 0.95; later, a great increase in adult mortality occurred, apparently due primarily to otter predation on hibernating turtles; there was no compensatory density-dependent response in reproduction and recruitment (Brooks et al. 1991, Iverson 1991) In Michigan, actual annual survivorship of juveniles was over 0.65 by age 2 and averaged 0.77 between ages 2 and 12 years; annual survivorship of adult females ranged from 0.88 to 0.97. Population stability was most sensitive to changes in adult or juvenile survival and less sensitive to changes in age at sexual maturity, nest survival, or fecundity (Congdon et al. 1994). In South Dakata Hammer (1969) reported that predators destroyed 59% of nests, and that emergence in undisturbed nests was less than 20% (Hammer 1969). Snapping Turtles may be limited in range in the north by overwintering mortality (Obbard 1981). Snapping Turtles are relatively long-lived. In an

Ontario population, females have an average lifespan of 40 years (Galbraith and Brooks 1989), and average lifespan of a South Carolina population was 28 years (Ernst et al 1994). The record for a captive individual is 47 years (Werner et al. 2004).

Status and Conservation

Although this species is common in many parts of its range, it is rare in Montana, having been recorded in only a few watersheds of southeastern Montana. Due to this restricted range and the lack of information this species in Montana, it is considered a state species of concern, and is listed as sensitive by the Bureau of Land Management. Studies identifying or addressing specific risk factors for *C. serpentina* in Montana are lacking. However, documented studies and other issues pertaining to their conservation include the following: **(1)** Roads often have negative impacts on population size and distribution of reptiles, and particularly turtles. High road density has been positively correlated to low population size. This has led to absence of species in road-developed areas and led to local extirpations. (Rudolph et al. 1998, Jochimsen et al. 2004). *C. serpentina* females often migrate over a kilometer to reach suitable nesting sites (Obbard and Brooks 1981a), which makes them particularly vulnerable to road kill. During a three year study in Ontario, Haxton (2000) noted that 30.5% of all turtles observed were killed on roads. **(2)** Snapping turtles, particularly in northern populations take over 15 years to attain sexual maturity, have extended reproductive lifespans, high natural adult survival rates, and extended longevity. Egg and hatchling mortality is also often very high attributing to a low annual reproductive potential. These are life history traits are typical of long-lived species vulnerable to adult mortality. Minimum levels of natural (e.g. winter kill) or human-caused mortality to mature adults can have serious negative impacts to populations. Due to this low reproductive potential, seriously diminished populations can take years to recover (Brooks et al. 1988, Brooks et al. 1991, Congdon et al. 1994, Congdon et al. 1995). **(3)** Snapping Turtles are a long-lived bottom dwellers that can store environmental contaminants their body fat, muscle tissue, liver, and eggs making them particularly susceptible to bioaccumulation. They often carry high concentrations of organochlorine contaminants such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) (Brooks et al. 1988, Harding 1997). **(4)** Popular for meat and soup dishes, *C. serpentina* are managed as game animals in many states. Due to their low reproductive potential, over-harvesting can decimate local populations, which can take years to recover (Brooks et al. 1988). Harvesting of adults is more detrimental to long-term population viability than high levels of egg and hatchling mortality, which normally occur. Human harvesting of *C. serpentina* in Montana is not well documented, but may occur where they are abundant. **(5)** Dams and large reservoirs on rivers (e.g. Fort Peck Dam and Reservoir) may inhibit population continuity to some degree, judging by the apparent lack of viable populations on the Missouri River in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003). However, there is no quantitative data to verify this. Snapping Turtles will travel large distances overland and therefore may be able to bypass some dams.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. More thorough documentation of *C. serpentina* presence across its historic range in Montana is needed, especially in areas of residential and industrial development.
2. Annual monitoring of known populations to assess changes and identify threats should be undertaken.
3. Introduced populations should be eliminated as quickly as possible to prevent proliferation and avoid negative effects on native species. Control measures should be conducted year

round with emphasis on the mating and nesting period (May-June) because they are more easily spotted and captured during this period. Aquatic hoop traps baited with malodorous meats are likely to have the greatest chance of capture.

4. Studies of population dynamics in relation to roads and highways are needed to identify any negative impacts and develop effective measures to reduce them. For example, areas with significantly high road mortality should be identified so that innovative structures, such as wall-and-culvert arrays ("critter culverts"), can be installed to allow the safe passage beneath roads.
5. Baseline and monitoring studies should be undertaken to investigate potential impacts of oil and gas development on *C. serpentina* habitat and populations. Emphasis should be placed on water quality of inhabited streams and ponds in the area of recent coal-bed-methane development near known populations in southeastern Montana.
6. Due to a substantial lack of data in Montana, the public and scientific community should be encouraged to report findings or undertake studies of population demography and ecology, dispersal, nesting success, and other life history characteristics. Fisherman should be encouraged to report incidences of unintentional catches. Routine surveys for Snapping Turtles in appropriate habitats could be made a standard part of the field duties of fisheries biologists. Management personnel should collect dead individuals to collect data on size, sex, and food consumption.
7. Well-used nesting sites, or high-quality potential nesting areas, should be identified, protected, and monitored.
8. The occurrence and degree of unregulated harvesting for food should be examined and considered in management decisions.

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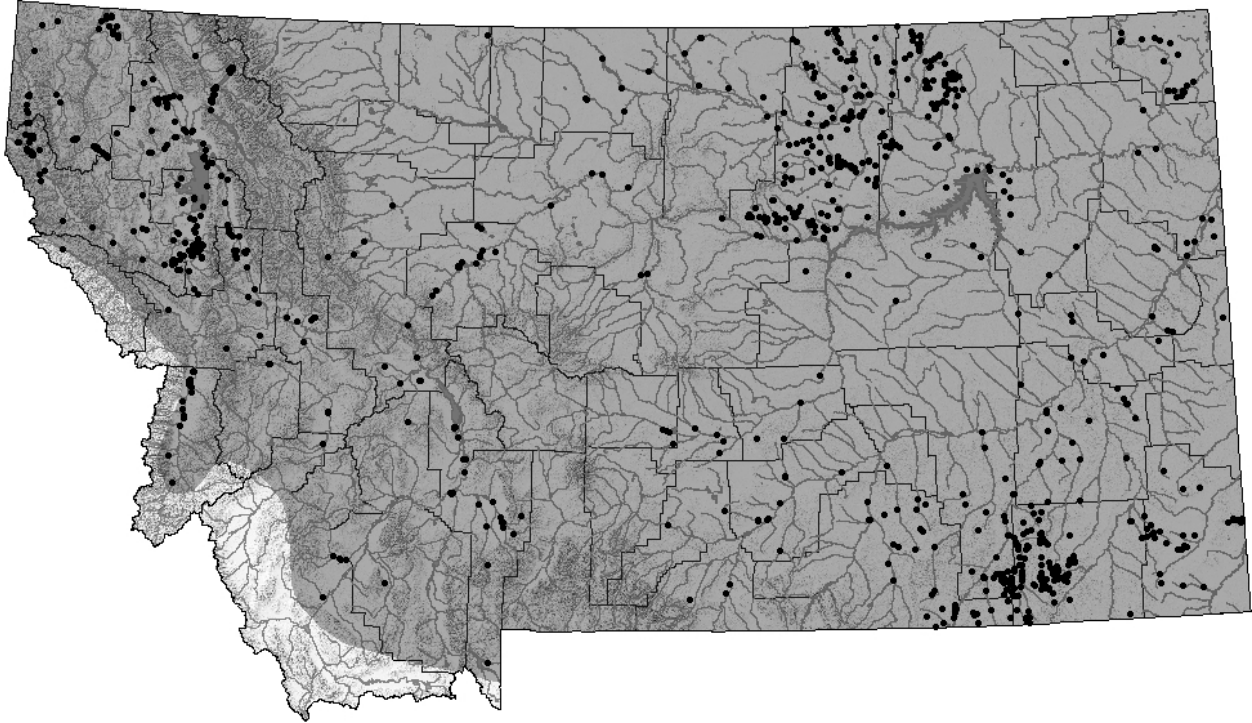
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Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The western painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta belli*) in Montana is one of four subspecies of *Chrysemys picta* whose range extends across much of North America and southern Canada. The eastern painted turtle, *C. p. picta*, is generally found in southeastern Canada, the northeastern U.S. and into southeastern U.S.; the midland painted turtle, *C. p. marginata* is documented in a few mid-western states, the western painted turtle, *C. p. belli* is found in the western U.S. and Canadian provinces, and the southern painted turtle, *C. p. dorsalis* is generally located in the southcentral and southeastern U.S. states (NatureServe 2006). *Chrysemys dorsalis* (*C. p. dorsalis*) has been recognized as a distinct species from *Chrysemys picta* by Starkey et al. (2003) based upon molecular data. Disagreements on this point as a result of apparent intergrades in western Kentucky, southern Illinois, and southeastern Missouri leave the debate open if *C. dorsalis* is indeed conspecific with *C. picta* (NatureServe 2006). The painted turtle is found throughout Montana at lower elevations, with only a few counties in the central portion of the state lacking documented observations (Werner et al. 2004).

Maximum Elevation

1,993 m (6,539 ft) in Duck Creek Bay of Hebgen Reservoir in Gallatin County (Clint Sestrich, Adam Kehoe, and Kyle Salzman, MTNHP 2008).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are white, smooth, and oval, about 31 mm (1.2 in) long. Initially flexible, the shell gradually becomes firmer as water is absorbed (Ernst et al 1994, Werner et al. 2004). Clutch size

can range from 6-21 eggs; eggs are laid in a nest dug into sandy, loamy, or other friable soil (Ernst et al. 1994, Russell and Bauer 2000). Nest digging and egg laying can take up to four hours (Ernst et al. 1994), after which the eggs are covered over with soil. Poor weather conditions, such as extreme heat or drought can delay nesting (Lindeman 1989, Ernst et al. 1994).

Juveniles and Adults:

The Painted Turtle is named for highly decorative yellow or reddish orange markings on its carapace and yellow markings on its legs, tail, and head. The plastron is a brilliant yellow or reddish-orange with a large olive, loosely symmetrical blotch in the center, while the carapace is mainly olive to black with more distinct yellow or reddish-orange markings along its outer edge. Striking yellow lines along the head and neck are distinctive for this species. Yellow markings on the fore and hind legs and tail are also present, but less obvious than those on the head. The plastron is a brilliant yellow or reddish-orange with a large olive, loosely symmetrical blotch in the center. Brighter than adults, juveniles are otherwise similar in coloration. Adult females are larger than males; carapace length can vary from 8-18 cm (3.2 to 7.1 inches) (Werner et al. 2004). Sexual maturity appears more a consequence of size in males (maturity occurs when plastron lengths of 70-95), rather than age, and enhanced growth can shorten the average age of maturity of four years to two (Ernst et al. 1994). Females generally mature at 6-10 years of age at which time their plastron length ranges from 97-128 mm (Ernst et al. 1994). Mature males have a flat plastron, long forefeet claws, and rear vent located beyond the edge of the carapace, while the forefeet claws of the female are relatively short with the vent located at or inside the rear edge of the carapace (Hammerson 1999). Juveniles are distinguishable by a deep crease in the abdominal plastron shields and hatchlings have a keeled carapace and vivid orange plastron (Hammerson 1999).

Similar Species:

Lacking the distinct bright coloration, it is unlikely other turtle species in the state would be confused with the Painted Turtle. The spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifera*) is smooth and creamy light brown in coloration with a relatively pointed head and flat pancake-like appearance. The snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) has a dark brown, grey, or black carapace without contrasting coloration patterns anywhere on the shell or body. The spiny softshell is found in the central and eastern portions of the state, along the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and their main tributaries; while the snapping turtle is limited to the central and southern portions of eastern Montana (Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

An animal of aquatic environments, the Painted Turtle prefers slow-moving shallow waterways (streams, marshes, ponds, lakes and creeks) with soft mud bottoms and aquatic vegetation. Partially submerged logs and rocks for basking are desirable habitat features. Painted turtles become active in late March or early April and may be observed basking on sun exposed banks, rocks, or logs in ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and streams. Nesting generally occurs from May until mid-July, with the majority of nesting activity in June and early July. Christens and Bider (1987) found a consistent correlation between the mean temperature of the previous year for the current year's nest initiation date for nests in Quebec, Canada. The flask-shaped nests are dug with the hind feet into rain-soaked soil, or soil sometimes softened with bladder water during digging

(Ernst et al. 1994). Nests are placed in terrestrial habitats and may range up to 600 meters from water, where the eggs are left to incubate on their own (Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999). Nest placement and the associated microsite characteristics are important as the sex of the incubating eggs is determined by temperature (cooler temperatures produce males, warmer produce females). While females may lay up to three clutches of eggs in one breeding season, Iverson and Smith (1993) reported an unusual 4 clutches for two females. Tinkle (et al. 1981) estimated that 30-50% of females may not reproduce every year. Egg size and clutch size increase with female body size (Hammerson 1999).

The majority of nesting occurs during the afternoon hours, with a smaller proportion of nests initiated in the morning (Ernst et al. 1994). Nesting may occur early or late into the summer. Nests that hatch later in the breeding season may exhibit delayed emergence, e.g. the young overwinter in the nest. Even though Brettenbach et al. (1984) found greater survivorship of nests in Michigan if covered by a beneficial layer of snow, substantial mortality of overwintering hatchlings can occur (Nagle et al. 1999). Nest mortality (resulting from predation) can be high especially for those nests placed closer, rather than farther, from a water source (Christens and Bider 1987). In Christens and Bider's (1987) study, hatchlings overwintering in the nest survived early predation, suggesting that open nests may trigger olfactory clues and make early predation more likely. Behaviorally, juveniles and hatchlings may differ from mature individuals in habitat use. In Michigan, Congdon (et al. 1992) found that the hatchlings and juveniles were found in more shallow areas of marsh habitat. This behavior could result from greater food resources available or an attempt to avoid the larger predators present in deeper water (Hammerson 1999). In addition to living and dead plants, painted turtles may consume a wide variety of living or dead organisms including: worms, leeches, insect larvae, pupae, and adults, as well as beetles, damselflies, dragonflies, water striders, water mites, spiders, mayflies, springtails, mosquitoes, crustaceans, snails, clams, frogs, and fish (Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999). In small marsh systems, the home range size may be very small (e.g., average of 1.2 ha in Michigan) (Rowe 2003), whereas in rivers, individual home range sizes are generally much larger (e.g., 7-26 km (MacCulloch and Secoy 1983, NatureServe 2006). This turtle species may colonize areas only seasonally wet, but must return to permanent waters for winter hibernation. Adult mortality can occur for individuals overwintering in areas prone to both drought and widely ranging winter temperatures. Christiansen and Bickham (1989) discovered more than 100 painted turtles frozen to death when the pond in which they were hibernating had frozen to the bottom.

Status and Conservation

The painted turtle is the most abundant turtle species in Montana; both the spiny softshell and snapping turtle have much smaller ranges, fewer recorded observations, and are more likely to be collected for harvest (Maxell and Hokit 1999, Werner et al 2004). At the time the comprehensive summaries of amphibians and reptiles in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004) were published, the painted turtle was documented in 41 counties, broadly distributed across both the western and eastern portions of the state. Counties absent of records are generally located in the central portion of the state. State records are comprised of 392 observations in 40 counties, with 60 museum voucher records from 19 counties. The distribution of this species reflects its relative abundance compared to the two other turtle species in Montana. Specific state status information on the painted turtle is not available for Montana.

Global trends over the short term are identified as stable, and relatively stable over the long term (NatureServe 2006).

Studies identifying or addressing specific risk factors for *C. serpentina* in Montana are lacking; however, documented studies and other issues pertaining to their conservation include the following: (1) During the breeding season, females are quite sensitive to disturbance while on nesting forays; human activity (e.g. fishing) can disrupt nesting activity even from a distance (Hammerson 1999). (2) Artificially high mammalian predator numbers resulting from human-augmented food resources can result in lower abundance of local turtle populations. While the raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is the most detrimental native predator in all life stages of this turtle species (Ross 1988, Ernst 1994), other native predators of painted turtle nests include the thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*), chipmunk (*Tamias*), squirrel (*Sciurus*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), badger (*Taxidea*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), raven (*Corvus corax*), garter snake (*Thamnophis radix*), and other snakes (*Coluber*). Hatchlings and small juveniles may fall prey to giant water beetles (Memiptera: Belostomatidae, Hammerson 1999). Young turtles are under threat of predation by muskrats (*Ondatra*), mink (*Mustela*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), snapping turtles (*Chelydra*), snakes (*Coluber*), bullfrog (*Rana*), large fish (*Micropterus*, *Ictalurus*), herons (*Ardea*), and water bugs (*Hemiptera*) (Ernst et al. 1994, Maxell and Hokit 1999). In addition to raccoons, adult turtles may be preyed upon by eagles (*Haliaeetus*), osprey (*Pandion*), and hawks (*Buteo*). (3) Fowle's (1996) mortality study in Montana reported most turtles found dead on the road occurring from late May to mid July consisted of 43% adult males, 26% adult females, and 31% of unknown sex, including juveniles. Densities of adult turtles were positively correlated with pond distance from the highway, and proportionally more juveniles and fewer adults were found at ponds closest to the highway, implying that roadkill mortality may be killing proportionally more adults (Fowle 1996). (4) Ernst (1999) notes that, notwithstanding all of the potential wild predators, the greatest source of mortality for painted turtles is probably human caused: road kills, habitat destruction, pet trade, indiscriminate shooting and pesticide poisoning.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. More thorough documentation of painted turtle presence across its range in Montana is needed, especially in areas of high recreational use and those locations with the potential for residential and industrial development.
2. Studies of population dynamics in relation to highways and other roads within areas of known painted turtle populations are needed to identify species responses to these habitat perturbations and develop effective measures for mitigation of negative impacts, e.g. the installation of innovative structures such as amphibian-reptile walls and culverts to allow the safe passage of animals.
3. The impacts of motor vehicles and indiscriminate shooting should be examined where populations are found in close proximity to areas of high human use. This pertains especially to any areas where off-road vehicle use is permitted.
4. Studies investigating the impact of new energy production facilities that affect local water sources, i.e. coal bed methane, should be undertaken to identify impact on painted turtles (and other water-dependent fauna).

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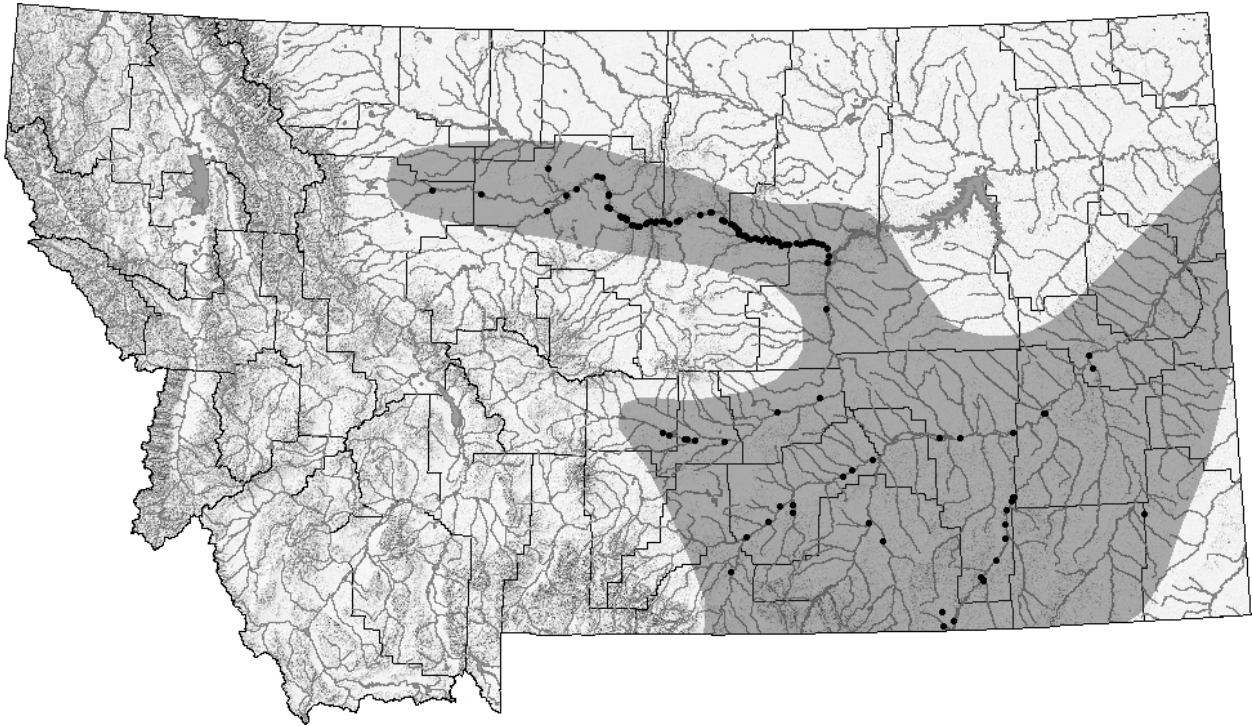
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Spiny Softshell (*Apalone spinifera*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The spiny softshell is one of three North American turtle species formerly in the genus *Trionyx* that were moved *Apalone* by Meylan (1987). Other authors (Webb 1990, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003) have retained the spiny softshell in *Trionyx*. Molecular data (Weisrock and Janzen 2000) indicate a genetic dichotomy between populations of spiny softshell north and west of Louisiana and populations from the Gulf Coast in southeastern North America. The spiny softshell is divided into seven subspecies, six of which are present north of Mexico (Webb 1962, 1973, Ernst et al. 1994). The subspecies present in Montana is the western spiny softshell, *A. spinifera hartwegi* (Conant and Goin 1948, Webb 1962, 1973, Ernst et al. 1994). The spiny softshell is found from Montana east to southern Quebec, south in the west through northern and eastern Wyoming, eastern Colorado, New Mexico and Texas to northern Mexico, and east through the Midwest west of the Appalachian Mountains in the northeast, and throughout the Gulf region and southeastern United States to the Florida panhandle, to elevations of about 1580 m (5200 ft) (Stebbins 2003). It has been introduced in the Colorado-Gila river system of Arizona and in New Jersey (Webb 1973). There are disjunct populations in several areas around the periphery of the range. Populations in Montana are isolated from the remainder of the species and subspecies range, and merit genetic examination. In Montana, there are known from 14 counties east of the Continental Divide. There is an obvious absence of records along the Missouri River at and below Fort Peck Reservoir, and few records from the Musselshell River in central Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004). Available records suggest that the Missouri and Yellowstone populations within Montana are isolated from each other.

Maximum Elevation

1,097 m (3,600 ft) in Big Horn County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

The shell is flattened (“pancake-like”), with flexible edges and covered with leathery skin. Small conical tubercles or “spines” are present on the front edge of the carapace above the neck. The snout is tubular and flexible, with a ridge along the inner margin of each nostril. The lips are fleshy and cover sharp-edged jaws. Limbs are flat, and the toes are broadly webbed. Carapace coloration is olive-brown, brown, or grayish, with a cream or yellowish margin. The plastron is unmarked and cream to yellowish in coloration (Webb 1962, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003). In mature males, the carapace is like sandpaper in texture, and marked with small dark spots or circles. The tail is thick and long, with the vent well beyond the rear edge of the carapace. In mature females, the carapace is not notably like sandpaper in texture, is more generally mottled or marked with blotches, the tubercles at the front edge of the carapace are more prominent than in males, and the tail is relatively short. Juveniles generally are like adults in appearance, with overall characteristics that are female-like, except the carapace coloration, which is male-like. In hatchlings, the carapace is olive to tan, with small dark circles, spots, or dashes, and a yellowish margin bordered by a black line. Adult females can reach 54 cm in carapace length (CL), while males are smaller by an average of 10 cm, and reach about 22 cm in carapace length. For example a study in southeastern Montana produced fourteen males ranging from 14.8-21.6 cm CL (290-730 grams), and 23 males ranging from 28.3-43.8 cm CL (2080-6700 grams) (Gates 2005). Hatchlings are about 3-4 cm in carapace length.

Eggs:

Eggs are white, smooth, spherical, thick-shelled and brittle, and about 24-32 mm in diameter. Clutch size can range from as few as 4 eggs to as many as 40 (typically 12-18), with eggs deposited in flask-shaped nests that are covered with soil (Webb 1962, Miller et al. 1989, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999).

Similar Species:

The spiny softshell differs from other Montana turtles by having a flattened and leathery shell that is soft and lacks horny plates, and by the presence of a pointed snout with tubular nostrils. The smooth softshell (*A. muticus*), which occurs in the Missouri River in South Dakota and southern North Dakota (Hoberg and Gause 1989, Ballinger et al. 2000), differs from the spiny softshell by lacking the ridge on the inner margin of each tubular nostril and the absence of tubercles or spines along the front edge of the carapace (Ernst et al. 1994).

Habitat Use/Natural History

The spiny softshell is primarily an animal of riverine systems, but also inhabits marshy creeks, bayous, oxbows, lakes, irrigation canals, and impoundments (Webb 1962, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003). A soft bottom with some aquatic vegetation appears to be essential, and sandbars and/or mudflats, as well as partially submerged debris (trees, fallen logs, brush), are usually present. In shallow water, young spiny softshells bury themselves in soft sand and silt in an attempt to seek refuge and concealment (Baxter and Stone 1985). In Iowa, females seemed to prefer open water more than did males (Williams and Christiansen 1981).

Because spiny softshells dehydrate quickly when out of water, they are seldom seen far from water. However, they will move overland when exposed to falling water levels (Williams and Christiansen 1981). They burrow into the bottoms of permanent water bodies, either shallow or relatively deep (0.5-7.0 m), where they hibernate (Graham and Graham 1997, Plummer and Burnley 1997). Hibernation sites may occur within the summer home range or a few km from summer nesting areas. Habitat use by spiny softshells in Montana is probably similar to elsewhere in the range, but studies are lacking and there is little qualitative information available. They are encountered most often in the larger rivers and their tributaries. Adult males and females have been observed basking together on partially submerged logs in backwater sites of slow-moving water, on sandy and muddy riverbanks, and on partially submerged rocks in shallow water along major rivers. Hatchlings have been found in shallow water at rivers edge, burrowing into silty substrate with emergent vegetation present (Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). A small-scale trapping and visual encounter survey conducted on a six-mile stretch of the upper Tongue River in southeastern Montana concluded that the most successful trapping locations were near sandbar islands adjacent to pools with a soft organic bottom. Additionally, stretches of river with exposed boulders and basking logs produced the most visual observations (Gates 2005). In Vermont, spiny softshells migrated about 3 km between riverine wintering sites and river mouth nesting sites near Lake Champlain. Migratory movements were most extensive in spring and fall (Graham and Graham 1997). Annual home range size for male spiny softshells in Arkansas was 784-2310 m (average 1750 m) of stream length, and 683-2145 m (average 1400 m) for females (Plummer et al. 1997). During the active season, they were very mobile, and made movements on 85% of days. Adults are active from April to October (usually May to September) in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Colorado (Robinson and Murphy 1978, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999), and are similar elsewhere in the range (Webb 1962). Water temperatures of 12°C appear to determine when animals enter or emerge from hibernation in Vermont (Graham and Graham 1997). Adults emerge earlier and remain active longer into fall, than do juveniles. The length of the active season increases with decrease in latitude (Webb 1962). The period of activity in Montana is poorly documented, with records from early June to late July (Hendricks and Reichel 1996, Hendricks 1999). Mating occurs shortly after emerging from winter dormancy, in April or May. Nesting may begin in late May and extend into August, but usually occurs in June and July in Tennessee and Colorado (Robinson and Murphy 1978, Hammerson 1999). Eggs are laid in flask-shaped burrows excavated in coarse sand or fine gravel, to depths of 10-25 cm. Colorado nests contained 15-39 eggs (Miller et al. 1989, Hammerson 1999), but as few as 3 eggs have been reported in Indiana (Webb 1962). During the reproductive season, eggs may be laid in two clutches, but there is no evidence for production of multiple clutches throughout the species range (Robinson and Murphy 1978, Hammerson 1999). Eggs hatch in about 60-80 days. Most hatching occurs in August to September in Colorado. In some families of turtles, incubation temperature determines the sex of hatchlings, but this effect of incubation temperature does not appear to pertain to spiny softshells (Vogt and Bull 1982). Some hatchlings may overwinter in the nest and emerge the following spring, although there is no solid evidence that this occurs (Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999). Little information is available from Montana on any aspect of the reproductive biology of this species. A small juvenile with a carapace length of 4.0 cm was captured in mid-July on the Missouri River (Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). Individuals may live up to 50 years (based on the relationship between growth rate and observed carapace size). Females mature at a carapace length of about 25 cm (8-9 years of age), and males mature earlier (4-5 years) at a carapace length of about 16 cm

(Breckenridge 1955, Webb 1962). The oldest female of known age (a captive zoo animal) lived 25 years (Ernst et al. 1994). Nevertheless, little quantitative information is available on survival rate and longevity. Spiny softshells forage in the water, often on the bottom in shallow with vegetation, and are considered generalist carnivores. Major foods include crayfish, aquatic insects (at least seven Orders), and fishes; mollusks, worms, isopods, amphibians, carrion, and vegetation are also taken (Webb 1962, Ernst et al. 1994, Hammerson 1999). The diet in an Iowa study (Williams and Christiansen 1981) was about 25% insects, 36.5% fish as carrion, 5.8% small fish as live prey, and 55% crayfish, with plant material in 61% of stomachs. Prey may be chased, ambushed, or flushed and pursued. The diet in Montana has not been studied.

Status and Conservation

At the time the comprehensive summaries of amphibians and reptiles in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004) were published, there were about 70 total records for spiny softshell from 13 counties, with records scattered east of the Continental Divide along the Missouri River and tributaries between the confluence of the Musselshell River and Fort Benton, also low on the Marias River downstream from Tiber Reservoir, and along the Yellowstone River and tributaries between Edgar (Carbon County) and Glendive (Dawson County), and included the Clark Fork of the Yellowstone, Bighorn, Tongue, and Powder rivers. Populations in parts of the Missouri River (especially the Wild and Scenic portion) appear to be robust, with 21 and 24 individuals observed opportunistically on each of two float trips between Coal Banks and Judith landings in July 2003 and 2004 (Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). On the Tongue River near Brandenburg (Rosebud County), several basking adults were observed in three consecutive years (Hendricks 1999). On a six-mile stretch of the upper Tongue River, near Decker, a short, five-day trapping survey produced 37 Spiny Softshell captures at 14 of 30 trap locations without any recaptures, and an additional 60 individuals were seen basking while traversing the river (Gates 2005). This suggests a healthy population may be present in this region of the river. However, population density and trend estimates remain unavailable for any locality in Montana, including areas of recent surveys. In the Arkansas River of central Kansas, the population density of spiny softshells was estimated to be 500-700 individuals per river mile (Capron 1987), probably a value exceeding that in Montana. Connectivity of populations is unknown; the Missouri River population above Ft. Peck appears to be isolated from the Yellowstone River population, and spiny softshells in the Musselshell River may be isolated from the remainder of the Missouri River population. All spiny softshells in Montana appear to be isolated from the remainder of the species range in the United States, as there are no confirmed records from North Dakota (there is an old record from Fort Union, but the collection locality is uncertain; Maxell et al. 2003), and the nearest records in the Missouri River are from southeastern South Dakota (Hoberg and Gause 1989, Ballinger et al. 2000). Status on the Marias River is also uncertain. Spiny softshells were not reported by Mosimann and Rabb (1952) near the site of Tiber Reservoir prior to its flooding, but have been seen in recent years far downstream nearer the confluence with the Missouri River. At the local scale, limited data from other states suggest this species is relatively sedentary, with most movements restricted to about 3 km of stream or river (Graham and Graham 1997, Plummer et al. 1997). Given the limited distance spiny softshells move over land, populations are vulnerable to habitat fragmentation, especially by dams or other water diversion projects. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include habitat loss/fragmentation, dam construction, water diversion, pollutants (including herbicides and pesticides), accidental take during recreational fishing, mining of sand

and gravel, and off-road vehicle use (Hammerson 1999). However, perhaps the greatest risk to maintaining viable populations of spiny softshell in Montana is the lack of baseline data on its distribution, status, habitat use, and basic biology (Maxell and Hokit 1999), which are needed to monitor trends and recognize dramatic declines when and where they occur. Few studies address or identify risk factors. Throughout much of its range, the spiny softshell has been sought for food (Carr 1952), and is sometimes killed because of the erroneous belief that spiny softshells are harmful to fish populations (Webb 1962). The impact of accidental and intentional take by fisherman in Montana is unknown.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all general risk factors described above. More thorough documentation of the species' distribution across its range on the Missouri and Yellowstone river drainages in Montana is needed to determine if populations in these two major river drainages are no longer connected.
2. Genetic studies are needed from throughout Montana to determine a) the number of discrete genetic populations that are present in Montana, and b) the degree of genetic divergence that has occurred between the population(s) in Montana from populations elsewhere in the species' range.
3. Studies of habitat use are needed, especially as they relate to damming, water diversion, water releases, and the formation of sand and gravel bars where nesting occurs, to identify species responses to these habitat perturbations and develop effective measures for mitigation of negative impacts.
4. Studies of the food habits are needed to address concerns of sport fishermen over competition for fish.
5. Studies of population demography and dynamics are needed. Spiny softshells are long-lived, so excessive loss of adults from harvest, pollution, habitat loss, or other disturbances can have significant negative consequences for maintaining populations of this species, especially given the limited ability of spiny softshells to breach habitat barriers and enable recolonization.
6. Traditional nesting areas need to be identified and protected from human and human-related disturbance. Baseline predation rates on nests need to be measured, and nest predators identified, so that impact of nest predators can be anticipated if predator populations increase.
7. Routine surveys for spiny softshells in appropriate habitats should be made a standard part of field duties for fisheries biologists. Records should be taken and maintained of the incidental take by anglers, who should be encouraged to report any captured turtles. A variety of data could be collected from harvested animals including, carapace length, sex, and diet.

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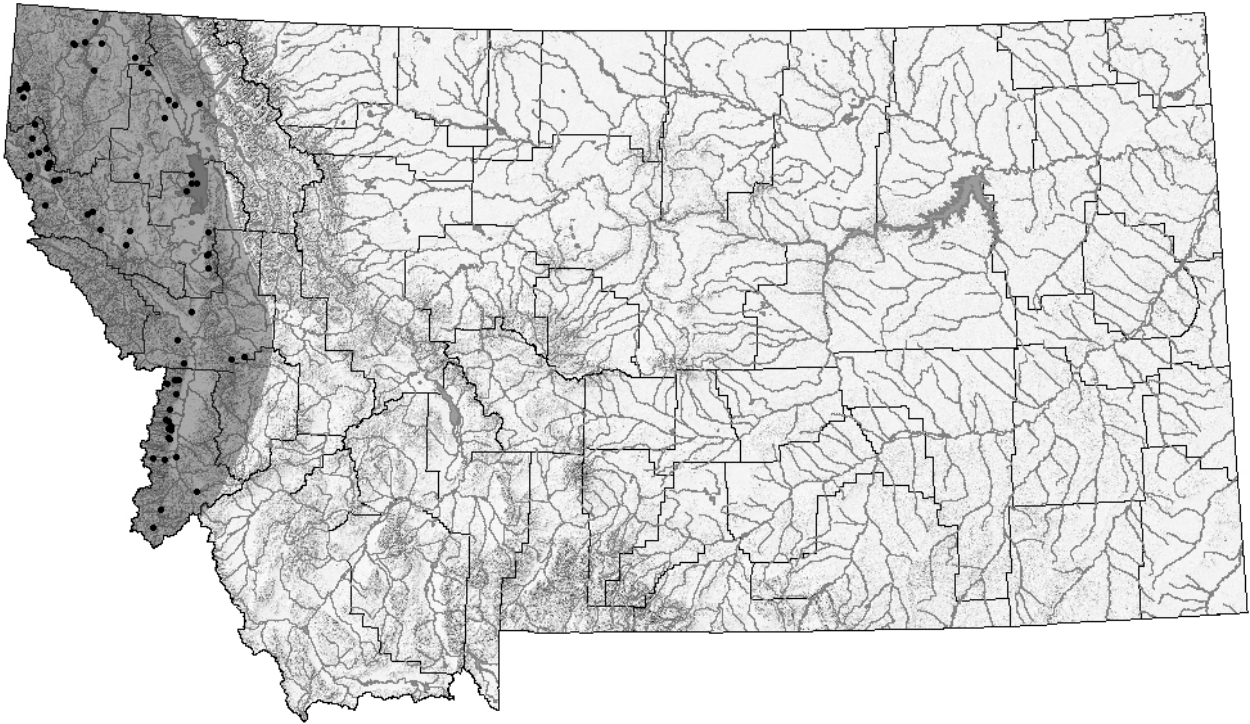
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Northern Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria coerulea*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The northern alligator lizard is one of seven species currently recognized in the genus *Elgaria* (Good 1988a, b); it was formerly included in the genus *Gerrhonotus* (Lais 1976). Four intergrading subspecies of northern alligator lizard (*Elgaria coerulea coerulea*, *E. c. palmeri*, *E. c. principis*, and *E. c. shastensis*) are recognized, with the northwestern alligator lizard (*E. c. principis*) the form present in Montana (Fitch 1938, Lais 1976, Werner et al. 2004). The northern alligator lizard is found west of the Continental Divide, from southern British Columbia in the north, south into northern Idaho and western Montana, and through northern and western Washington, western Oregon, the Coast Ranges and Sierra Nevada in California. Disjunct populations are present in southeast Oregon, northeast California, and northwestern Nevada along the state border (Lais 1976, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Vindum and Arnold 1997, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003), at elevations from sea level to 3200 m (10,500 ft). The species also occurs on some coastal islands off Washington and California. In Montana, there are about 75 records from six counties west of the Continental Divide, including a specimen from Wild Horse Island in Flathead Lake (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004).

Maximum Elevation

1,618 m (5,310 ft) in Ravalli County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

The body is elongate and the legs are short. The back is brown, tan, or gray to olive, yellow, or greenish. Juveniles have a broad reddish-tan stripe running the length of the back. The dark

sides of the body are often checkered with small dark patches, and there is a distinctive dark patch around the eye (Stebbins 2003). The belly scale rows are edged with a darker area, giving the white to pale gray belly a banded appearance. There is a distinctive fold of skin running along each side of the body, extending between the legs, and revealing small granular scales when spread apart. Males have larger and broader triangular-shaped heads than do females. Adult northern alligator lizards are 7.0-10.0 cm snout-vent length and up to 20.0 cm in total length. Newly born young are about 2.0-3.0 cm snout-vent length and 7.5 cm total length (Pimentel 1959, Vitt 1973, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Werner et al. 2004).

Eggs:

The northern alligator lizard is viviparous and does not lay eggs. Eggs develop internally and females give birth to live young. Broods include 2-15 young (typically 3-6), averaging about 4 (Lewis 1946, Pimentel 1959, Vitt 1973, Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003).

Similar Species:

Body morphology (elongate body with short legs) and presence of a longitudinal fold of skin on each side of the body separates the northern alligator lizard from other lizards native to Montana. Western skinks have a shiny appearance, distinct longitudinal stripes of brown, black, and golden-yellow, and a blue tail in juveniles and young adults. Greater short-horned lizards are flattened, widened through the body, and “prickly.” The pale bellies of common sagebrush lizard and western fence lizard lack darkened edging that gives the belly a banded appearance, they sometimes have blue patches on the belly and throat, and both species also feel rough when handled, due to the keeled scales (St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003). Only the western skink is broadly sympatric with the northern alligator lizard in western Montana, although the western fence lizard is present at one locality (in Sanders County) within its Montana range (Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

The northern alligator lizard occurs in areas cooler and more humid than tolerated by most lizards, but it also requires some sunny clearings as well. It is found in coastal strand communities of stabilized dunes, mixed coniferous forest, often in grassy grown-over areas at margins of woodlands, in clear cuts, sometimes near streams with riparian strips of aspen or other tree and shrub species, sometimes dense, and in juniper-sagebrush and rabbitbrush habitats (Svihla 1942, Lais 1976, Stewart 1979, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Vindum and Arnold 1997, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003). In these habitats it occurs on the ground often under downed wood and rocks, and in leaf and needle litter. Habitat use in Montana has not been the subject of study, but records associated with encounters provide a sense of habitat requirements. Several observations of northern alligator lizards have been made on south-facing slopes, in or at the margins of fine to coarse talus. Sometimes these sites have had little canopy cover, but more often there has been some cover of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and a variety of shrubby species (serviceberry, ninebark, mock orange), and a litter layer of dried leaves and conifer needles, and are sometimes fairly close to streams (Place 1989, Werner and Reichel 1994, Hendricks and Reichel 1996, Werner et al. 1998, Boundy 2001, Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). Home range size has not been reported, but adults in coastal Washington are gregarious in early spring and fall, concentrating in localized hibernation sites (Vitt 1973), and at a coastal California location most animals were relatively sedentary, usually being recaptured within 10 m of initial capture site;

marked lizards were never found outside the 1.5 ha study plot (Stewart 1985). Mating occurs in April and May in coastal Washington (Svihla 1942, Lewis 1946, Vitt 1973), and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Gestation is about three months, with a single brood of young born in August-September in coastal California and Washington (Lewis 1946, Vitt 1973, Stewart 1985). No information is available from Montana on any aspect of the reproductive biology of this species. Females in northern California reach sexual maturity in about 32 months, or their third year (Stewart 1985), with larger females producing larger clutches and young (Pimentel 1959, Stewart 1979). There appears to be no size dimorphism between the sexes, although sometimes within populations females may be larger (Stewart 1985). No information is available on longevity of northern alligator lizards, but late age of maturity and low fecundity suggest long life expectancy (Vitt 1973, Stewart 1985). Annual mortality in a coastal California population was 46% for all juvenile size classes and 27% for adults (Stewart 1985), with adult female survivorship exceeding that of adult males. Adults and juveniles actively forage, albeit not widely and sometimes haltingly in a slow stalk or propelled snake-like, with the legs folded at the sides (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Place 1989, St. John 2002). Hunting is mainly by sight, but there is evidence that they can identify prey by odor (Cooper 1990), hence one reason for high rates of tongue-flicking. Arthropods form most of the diet, but slugs and earthworms are also taken. Other prey types also include snails, spiders, millipedes, centipedes, and ticks, and captives have eaten neonatal mice (Cooper 1990, Stebbins 2003).

Status and Conservation

At the time the comprehensive summaries of amphibians and reptiles in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004) were published, there were 74 total records for northern alligator lizard from six counties west of the Continental Divide, with records concentrated near the Idaho state line, and extending east to the western base of the Whitefish Range and west slope of the Mission Mountains. With so few records, the current status in Montana is largely uncertain. The northern alligator lizard has not been documented in Glacier National Park (Marnell 1997), but has been reported south of there in the Mission Mountains on the east side of the Flathead Valley (Brunson and Demaree 1951, Werner et al. 1998). There is also a noticeable absence of records between the lower Clark Fork River and the Flathead Valley, despite seemingly suitable habitat in that region, and the eastern extent of the range in Montana is poorly defined. Because the northern alligator lizard has not been the focus of life history or population studies in Montana, it is difficult to identify conservation needs. At the local scale, limited data from California and Washington indicate this species is relatively sedentary and gregarious (Vitt 1973, Stewart 1985). Thus, populations appear vulnerable to habitat fragmentation, especially where valley bottom habitat is developed or dramatically altered. Population density measurements are not available for Montana, and are few overall; a two-year mark-recapture study at a coastal California site resulted in a mean monthly estimate of 142-167 lizards for the 1.5 ha study area, and an average density of 95-111 lizards when adjusted for juvenile mortality (Stewart 1985). In British Columbia, they may be locally abundant, but are usually distributed fairly sparsely (Gregory and Campbell 1984). To summarize, risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include habitat loss/fragmentation, fire, road and trail development, quarrying, river/stream impoundment, and use of pesticides and herbicides. However, perhaps the greatest risk to maintaining viable populations of northern alligator lizard in Montana is the lack of baseline data on its distribution, status, habitat use, and basic biology (Maxell and Hokit 1999), which are needed to monitor trends and recognize dramatic declines

when and where they occur. No studies address or identify risk factors. Presence of northern alligator lizards in “cut-over areas” indicates some degree of tolerance to canopy removal, so long as ground cover remains (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Some vegetative cover or talus appears to be desirable in areas where foraging occurs. Invasion of exotic weeds into occupied habitat has and continues to occur in western Montana, but it is unclear how associated habitat changes may affect populations. Use of chemical agents to control weed and insect pest infestations could depress populations of northern alligator lizards, which feed on ground-dwelling arthropods. Several alligator lizards died in the laboratory after they ate caterpillars of the cinnabar moth, an introduced pest control agent for controlling poisonous tansy ragweed, and there is a possibility that this exotic moth may have adverse effects on northern alligator lizard populations (Nussbaum et al. 1983).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all general risk factors described above, with the exception of water impoundments/recreational facilities and harvest/commerce.
2. More thorough documentation of northern alligator lizard presence across its range in Montana is needed, especially between the lower Clark Fork River and the Flathead Valley, and the region east of Missoula and Ravalli counties. All of northwestern Montana needs focused surveys to determine potential connectivity among possibly isolated populations.
3. Studies of habitat use and population dynamics are needed, especially as they relate to livestock grazing, logging, and agricultural practices, to identify species responses to these habitat perturbations and develop effective measures for mitigation of any negative impacts that are identified.
4. Ground cover of rocks and woody debris should be maintained in occupied areas where timber harvest and other management actions are undertaken.
5. The direct and indirect impacts of insecticides, herbicides, and insect pest control agents used in weed and pest control programs need to be assessed, as use of these chemicals and insect agents could impact populations by eliminating prey or through direct poisoning. Monitoring of populations in areas already impacted by exotic weeds is desirable.

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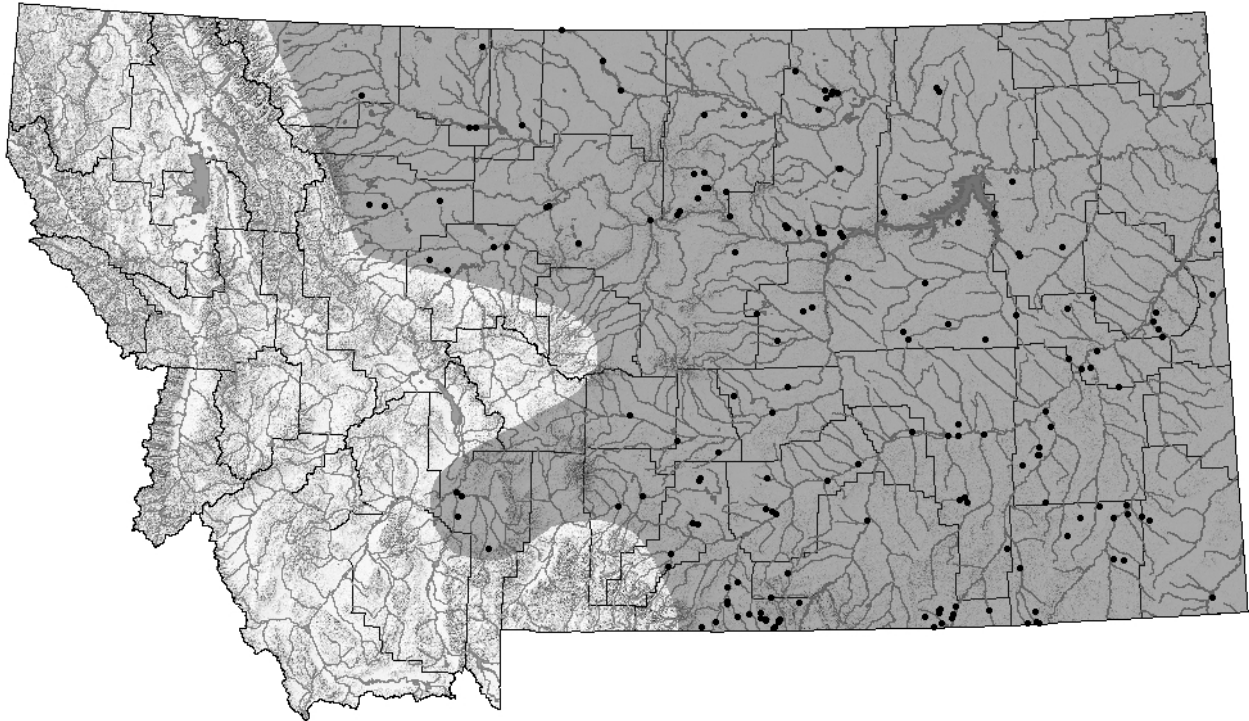
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Greater Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The short-horned lizard was recently split into the Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma douglasii*), the northwestern short-horned lizard subspecies prior to the split, and the Greater Short-horned Lizard (Zamudio et al. 1997, Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003), encompassing the other five subspecies prior to the reclassification (Reeve 1952). Analyses of genetic and morphological traits (Zamudio et al. 1997) also failed to support the validity of any subspecific differentiation across the range of the greater short-horned lizard. The greater short-horned lizard is found from southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan south through eastern Montana, the western Dakotas, Wyoming, western Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, eastern Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, and western Texas to southern Durango (Stebbins 2003), at elevations to 3355 m (11,000 ft) or more (Montanucci 1981, Hammerson 1999). The range limit in the vicinity of southeastern Idaho, western Wyoming, northern Utah, and northern Nevada has not been precisely determined (Baxter and Stone 1985, Hammerson 1999, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003). In Montana, there are over 147 records from 27 counties east of the Continental Divide. There is an obvious absence of records between the Missouri and Musselshell rivers in central Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004) that could reflect limited survey effort in that region.

Maximum Elevation

1981 m (6,500 ft) in Carbon County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

The greater short-horned lizard is viviparous, eggs develop internally and females give birth to live young. Broods can include up to 30 neonates or more, averaging about 12-18 (Smith 1941, Goldberg 1971, Ashton and Ashton 1998, Hammerson 1999), although broods are smaller in the north of their range (Powell and Russell 1991b, Hammerson 1999). The body is broad and flattened. The back is spiny, especially noticeable in a single row of scales fringing each side of the body. Spines at the back of the head are stubby and about as long as they are wide at their base (Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003). A noticeably wide and deep notch separates the right and left horns at the back of the head (St. John 2002). Coloration of the back can be shades of gray, brown, or pink, usually blending cryptically with the soil, and can vary somewhat from region to region, as well as at single localities and even single broods (Ashton and Ashton 1998). There are typically two paired rows of dark brown blotches on the back that are often edged in white. Maximum total length is about 15 cm (Hammerson 1999, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003). In males there is a swelling at the base of the tail, and the tail is proportionally longer than in females. Females outweigh males (18 g versus 10 g) and attain greater snout-vent lengths (7 cm versus 5 cm) (Powell and Russell 1985b, James et al. 1997). Newborn young are generally adult-like in appearance, with a broad and flattened body shape. They are about 2.0-2.5 cm snout-vent length and weigh about 0.7 –0.8 g, growing up to 3.8 cm by the time of first hibernation (Goldberg 1971, Powell and Russell 1991b, Ashton and Ashton 1998).

Similar Species:

The broad flattened body separates this lizard from the other lizard species regularly documented in Montana, and the range overlaps only with the common sagebrush lizard. The pigmy short-horned lizard (*Phrynosoma douglasi*) is present in adjacent southeastern Idaho and has been reported once from the Centennial Valley, Beaverhead County, in extreme southwestern Montana (Maxell et al. 2003). Adults of the pigmy short-horned lizard are much smaller than the greater short-horned lizard, they lack the wide notch between the horns on the back of the head that gives the head of the greater short-horned lizard a “heart-shape” appearance when viewed from above, and the small horns on the back of the head project almost vertically, rather than horizontally as in the greater short-horned lizard (St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

The greater short-horned lizard is an animal of short-grass and mixed-grass (*Stipa* and *Bouteloua*) prairies, sagebrush and other shrubland types, and open coniferous forest in mountains. They often occur in open, shrubby or wooded areas (e.g., piñon-juniper, pine-oak woodlands) with sparse vegetation at ground level and easy access to sunlight. Soil substrate may vary from rocky to sandy, but loose soil is usually present (Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003). In Alberta and Saskatchewan, greater short-horned lizard is often found in coulees and small canyons associated with streams and rivers in terrain of exposed “badland” shale, with a ground cover that includes creeping juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*) (Powell and Russell 1991a, 1998, Powell et al. 1998). In Colorado, this species was encountered frequently in prairie dog colonies (Clark et al. 1982). Habitat use in Montana has not been the subject of study, but this species occurs in sagebrush and grassland habitats, sometimes in the presence of sedimentary rock outcrops (limestone, sandstone) and glacial drift, and in areas with open stands of limber pine and Utah juniper or ponderosa pine (Mosimann and Rabb 1952, Werner 1974, Hendricks

1999, Vitt et al. 2005). Favored areas in Montana tend to have a relatively high percentage of open bare ground and loose soil. Home ranges of radio-tagged individuals in Alberta ranged from 4.4-2400 m² (James et al. 1998), with movements by females exceeding 100 m over a one week period prior to mating, and as much as 266 m during the week prior to hibernation. Home ranges may actually be larger, because individuals are relatively sedentary but make irregular long movements that vary with the season (Powell and Russell 1998). The greater short-horned lizard does not appear to be territorial (Powell and Russell 1998), although it exhibits some degree of site fidelity. A juvenile displaced 400m returned to its capture site in less than a year and was subsequently captured twice more at this location (Pianka and Parker 1975). Adults mate shortly after emerging from winter dormancy in late March to early June, depending on elevation and latitude. Young are born about two or three months after eggs are fertilized, mostly during early July to early August in Arizona (Smith 1941, Goldberg 1971), and late July to early August in Colorado, southern Wyoming, and Alberta (Powell and Russell 1991b, Ashton and Ashton 1998, Hammerson 1999). Size of eight litters from Alberta ranged from 6-13 young (Laird and Leech 1980, Powell and Russell 1998), one litter from Wyoming included 13 young, five litters in Colorado ranged from 14-18 young (Hammerson 1999), and 12 litters from Arizona included 9-30 young (Smith 1941, Goldberg 1971). Little information is available from Montana on any aspect of the reproductive biology of this species. Ten captive adult females from near Warren, Carbon County, gave birth in the first week of August (J. Barron, pers. comm.), and young about 3.0-3.5 cm snout-vent length have been observed in this area in August and early September (Hendricks 1999, Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). Sexual maturity of females is attained by the age of two years in Colorado (their third calendar year), at about 5-6 cm snout-vent length (Hammerson 1999). In Alberta, males apparently reach sexual maturity in the second year, following their first winter dormancy, although females appear to mature later (Powell and Russell 1985b, 1998). Sexual maturity is reached by two years of age in the southwestern states (Pianka and Parker 1975). Mature females are larger, on average, than males. Little information is available on survival rate and longevity. Recapture data suggested high juvenile mortality in Alberta, whereas adult survival was considered relatively high (Powell and Russell 1991b, 1998). This pattern appears to be the norm for other horned lizard species (Pianka and Parker 1975). Adults and juveniles are “sit-and-wait” predators that hunt mainly by sight. Ants and beetles are the most frequent foods across the range, but several other orders of arthropods are also taken (Pianka and Parker 1975, Laird and Leech 1980, Montanucci 1981, Powell and Russell 1984, Hammerson 1999). The diet in Montana is virtually undescribed; stomach contents of three individuals from coulees near the Marias River, Toole County, included mostly ants with a few beetles, grasshoppers, and spiders (Mosimann and Rabb 1952).

Status and Conservation

At the time the comprehensive summaries of amphibians and reptiles in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004) were published, there were about 130 total records for greater short-horned lizard from 27 counties, with records generally widely scattered across the state east of the Continental Divide. Cope (1879) considered the greater short-horned lizard about the most abundant reptile (second only to the Prairie Rattlesnake, *Crotalus viridis*) along the Missouri River, but it is no longer thought common anywhere in Montana, with the possible exception of some of the counties bordering Wyoming (Maxell et al. 2003). Populations in Carbon County appear to be robust (Vitt et al. 2005, J. Barron, pers. comm.), with many recent sightings (Barron reported 140 individuals near Warren in 2004) during favorable conditions. However, trend

estimates remain unavailable for any locality in Montana, including areas of recent surveys. Connectivity of populations is unknown. Large gaps of a hundred km or more exist between some documented occurrences north of the Missouri River, and status is uncertain west of the Mussellshell River and south of the Missouri River. At the local scale, limited data suggest this species is relatively sedentary, with some degree of site fidelity, although females may move 100 m or more prior to mating or winter dormancy (Pianka and Parker 1975, James et al. 1997, Powell and Russell 1998). Thus, populations appear vulnerable to habitat fragmentation. Densities of this species have not been determined with any degree of accuracy, but are thought to be generally low (considerably < 50 individual/ha) (Pianka and Parker 1975, Powell and Russell 1985b), although perhaps locally fairly common (Hammerson 1999). Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include habitat loss/fragmentation, grazing, fire, road and trail development, on- and off-road vehicle use, use of pesticides and herbicides, oil and gas development, and surface mining. However, perhaps the greatest risk to maintaining viable populations of greater short-horned lizard in Montana is the lack of baseline data on its distribution, status, habitat use, and basic biology (Maxell and Hokit 1999), which are needed to monitor trends and recognize dramatic declines when and where they occur. Few studies address or identify risk factors. In an Idaho study (Reynolds 1979), the closely related pigmy short-horned lizard was four times more abundant in sagebrush habitat than in sites dominated by exotic crested wheatgrass, and more abundant in sagebrush habitat grazed by sheep than in ungrazed sagebrush and either grazed or ungrazed crested wheatgrass. A greater abundance of invertebrates may explain the preference for sagebrush over crested wheatgrass habitat (Reynolds 1979). More open ground for basking in grazed sagebrush may explain its preference over ungrazed sagebrush (Reynolds 1979, Hammerson 1999). Local extirpations of greater short-horned lizard in Colorado have occurred in areas of intense cultivation and urban expansion, although this species seems to do well in areas used for livestock grazing (Hammerson 1999), perhaps because grazing reduces vegetative cover. Increased vehicular traffic in areas of oil and gas exploration and development have probably reduced populations in parts of Colorado (Hammerson 1999). Use of insecticides to control grasshopper infestations could also depress populations of this species, which feeds on these and other ground-dwelling insect species.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all general risk factors described above, with the exception of water impoundments/recreational facilities and harvest/commerce.
2. More thorough documentation of greater short-horned lizard presence across its range in Montana is needed, especially north of the Missouri River, the region between it and the Musselshell River, and extreme southeastern Montana, to determine potential connectivity among possibly isolated populations.
3. Efforts should be made to determine if historically documented populations still remain in the upper Missouri River watershed upstream of Canyon Ferry Reservoir. If populations are found, conservation measures are warranted.
4. Studies of habitat use and population dynamics are needed, especially as they relate to livestock grazing, agricultural activities (including CRP landscapes), areas of oil and gas field development, and surface mine reclamation, to identify species responses to these habitat perturbations and develop effective measures for mitigation of negative impacts.

5. Reduction of sagebrush cover to promote grass growth for livestock should be avoided or carefully assessed in areas occupied by common sagebrush lizards. Dense grass growth reduces the ability of lizards to move and increases the likelihood that fire will kill shrub cover, making the impacted area unsuitable for recolonization by greater short-horned lizard. Thus, moderate grazing may be beneficial to shrub habitats favored by this species. When and where shrub cover reduction is deemed desirable, it should be conducted in a way to retain a mosaic of cover conditions, including the presence of moderately tall shrubs (sagebrush and rabbitbrush in particular) at a relatively fine scale, to accommodate habitat requirements in home ranges that are fairly small.
6. Reliance upon prairie dog colonies by greater short-horned lizards deserves study in central Montana, as loss of prairie dog colonies could negatively impact local lizard populations in the short term. Exploration of this relationship is also merited to determine what role, if any, the dramatic reduction in habitat occupied by prairie dogs may have had on lizard populations during the last century.
7. The impacts of motor vehicles should be examined where populations are found in close proximity to areas of high human use. This pertains especially to any areas where off-road vehicle use is permitted.
8. The role of insecticides and herbicides in pest control programs of rangeland areas occupied by greater short-horned lizards needs to be determined, as use of these chemicals could severely impact lizard populations by eliminating a significant portion of their prey.

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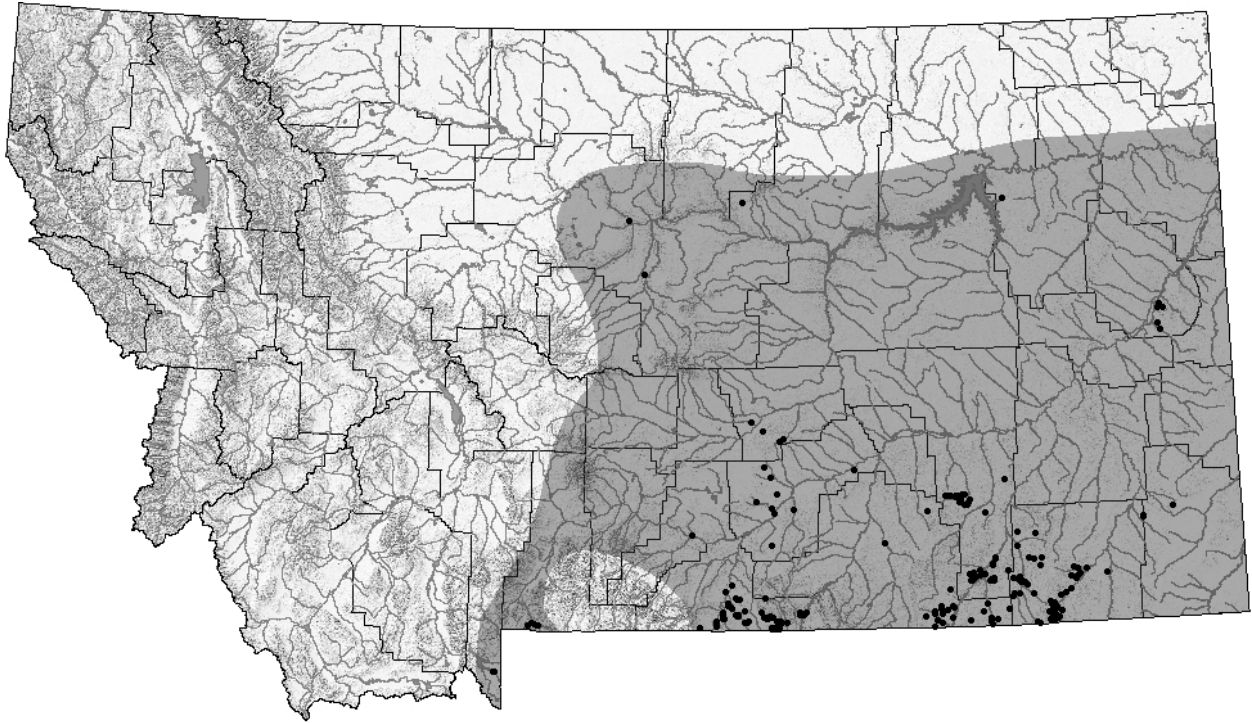
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Common Sagebrush Lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The common sagebrush lizard is a member of a large genus of North American lizards found from Panama to the Canadian border. Three subspecies are currently recognized: the disjunct sand dune lizard, *S. g. arenicolous*, of southeast New Mexico and adjacent Texas (Degenhardt and Jones 1972) has been elevated to full species status since Censky's (1986) sagebrush lizard species account. Two subspecies are restricted to Pacific coastal states of the U.S. and Baja Peninsula of Mexico. The northern sagebrush lizard, *Sceloporus graciosus graciosus*, occupies the majority of the species' range, and occurs from northern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico, north through Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, eastern Oregon, central Washington and southern Idaho, at elevations to 3200 m (10,500 ft) in the southwestern states (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Censky 1986), reaching the northeastern limits of its range in Montana and North Dakota (Hoberg and Gause 1989, Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004). In Montana, there are scattered records east of the Continental Divide across the south-central and southeastern counties north to the Missouri River.

Maximum Elevation

1,999 m (6,560 ft) in Gallatin County (Rawson and Pils 2005).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are white, leathery, and oval, about 13 mm (0.5 in) long and 8 mm (0.3 in) wide. Clutch size is 2-7 and clutches are laid in loose soil in shallow cavities, often at the base of a shrub (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004).

Juveniles and Adults:

The body is small and narrow. The back is covered with small spiny, keeled scales, and usually has a pale dorsolateral stripe on each side. Scales on the rear of the thigh are very small and often granular. Dorsal coloration is brown, olive or gray, with a bluish or greenish tinge. The sides of the body and neck often have a rusty-orange hue. Ventral surfaces of females are white or yellowish, while males have blue lateral abdominal patches and blue mottling on the throat (absent or very faint in females). Maximum snout-vent length is about 6.5 cm. Maximum total length is about 15 cm, with the tail length about 1.5 times the snout-vent length. Mature females are slightly larger than males. Mature males have enlarged postanal scales with two hemipenial swellings on the underside at the base of the tail. Gravid females may develop more intense reddish-orange color along the sides. Hatchlings are 2.3-2.8 cm snout-vent length, but otherwise adult-like in appearance (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Koch and Peterson 1995, Hammerson 1999, St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Similar Species:

The common sagebrush lizard lacks the broad flattened body and fringe of prominent spines on each side of the body that are present in the greater short-horned lizard, the only other Montana lizard with which the common sagebrush lizard overlaps in range. It differs from the western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) by having pale dorsolateral stripes rather than a checkered pattern of darker triangular blotches in rows across the back. The dorsal scales of the common sagebrush lizard are also less prickly and pointed and the blue throat patch in males is less pronounced. The northern alligator lizard has a prominent skin fold on the side of the body. The western skink has smooth shiny and flat dorsal scales, and juveniles and young skinks have conspicuous blue tails. Common sagebrush lizards have keeled or spiny scales, not flattened and shiny, and they never have a blue tail. Western fence lizard, northern alligator lizard and western skink are found only in northwestern Montana west of the Continental Divide (St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

The common sagebrush lizard is an animal of shrub-steppe habitats, preferring rocky outcrops or sandy soils in sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush communities, and also occupying manzanita, mountain mahogany, and *Ceanothus* brushland, pinyon-juniper woodland, and open ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests (Kerfoot 1968, Marcellini and Mackey 1970, Tinkle 1973, Tinkle et al. 1993, Green et al. 2001). In Yellowstone National Park, lizards are found at higher elevations in geothermal areas on rhyolite-covered hillsides with common juniper and lodgepole pine, and with woody debris scattered on the ground (Mueller 1967, Algard 1968, Koch and Peterson 1995). Habitat use in Montana has not been the subject of study, but this species occurs in sage-steppe habitats, sometimes in the presence of sedimentary rock outcrops (limestone, sandstone) and in areas with open stands of limber pine and Utah juniper or ponderosa pine (Hendricks 1996, Hendricks and Hendricks 2002, Vitt et al. 2005). Favored areas tend to have a high percentage of open bare ground and a component of low to tall shrubs. Although a ground dweller, the common sagebrush lizard will sometimes perch up to 1-2 m above ground in low shrubs and trees (Adolph 1990, Hammerson 1999). Rodent burrows, shrubs, logs, and leaf litter are used for cover when disturbed (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Home ranges may be relatively small, averaging 400-600 m² in Utah (Burkholder and Tanner 1974). Across much of the range, eggs are laid during May-July (Tinkle et al. 1993, Hammerson 1999). Most females in Colorado

and Utah produce two clutches each year. Clutch size is usually 3-7 eggs. Eggs hatch in 45-75 days, beginning in early to mid-August in Colorado and Utah, mid-to late August in west-central California (Tinkle et al. 1993, Hammerson 1999). During three summers in Yellowstone National Park, first hatchlings were noted 10-13 August (Mueller and Moore 1969). Hatchling snout-vent length in Colorado, Utah and California is about 2.5-2.7 cm (Ferguson and Brockman 1980, Tinkle et al. 1993, Hammerson 1999), with a growth rate of about 1 mm/week.. Essentially no information is available from Montana on any aspect of the reproductive biology of this species. Juveniles 2.8 cm snout-vent length were collected in mid- to late September in southern Carbon County, indicating eggs hatched sometime in late August or early September (Hendricks 1999, Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). Sexual maturity is attained in the first year in the southern portions of the range or second year in the northern portions of the range, although a significant percentage of females in Utah may not mature until their third year (Tinkle 1973, Tinkle et al. 1993, Hammerson 1999). Females in southern Utah produce their first clutch at an age of 22-24 months. Mean annual survival rate of young and adults is quite variable, but averages about 45% in Utah (Tinkle et al. 1993), although as many as three-fourths of hatchlings may die (Tinkle 1973, Burkholder and Tanner 1974, Hammerson 1999). Males and females in southern Utah can live for at least six years (Tinkle et al. 1993). Adults and juveniles are “sit-and-wait” predators that hunt mainly by sight, and the diversity of food items indicates prey is taken largely opportunistically (Burkholder and Tanner 1974). Ants, beetles, moths, and termites are the most abundant of nine orders of insects in the diet. Spiders, scorpions, pseudoscorpions, ticks, and mites have also been reported as foods, and adults sometimes eat hatchling lizards (Burkholder and Tanner 1974, Rose 1976a, Koch and Peterson 1995, Hammerson 1999).

Status and Conservation

At the time the comprehensive summaries of amphibians and reptiles in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004) were published, there were only 73 total records from 13 counties east of the Continental Divide for common sagebrush lizard. Most records are from Big Horn, Carbon, Powder River, and Rosebud counties. Populations in Carbon and Powder River counties appear to be robust (Vitt et al. 2005, BAM, pers. obs.), with many recent sightings during favorable conditions, although size and trend estimates remain unavailable for any locality in Montana, including areas of recent surveys. Connectivity of populations is unknown; gaps of several hundred kilometers exist between documented occurrences along the Missouri River, the lower Yellowstone River, and the concentration of records in south-central Montana. At the local scale, removal experiments show recolonization from adjacent areas can rapidly occur in unaltered habitat (M'Closkey et al. 1997). Densities of this species can be as high as 200 individuals/ha (Tinkle 1973). Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include habitat loss/fragmentation, grazing, fire, road and trail development, on- and off-road vehicle use, use of pesticides and herbicides, oil and gas development, and surface mining. However, perhaps the greatest risk to maintaining viable populations of common sagebrush lizard in Montana is the lack of baseline data on its distribution, status, habitat use, and basic biology (Maxell and Hokit 1999), which are needed to monitor trends and recognize dramatic declines when and where they occur. Few studies address or identify risk factors. In an Idaho study (Reynolds 1979), common sagebrush lizards were more abundant in ungrazed than grazed sagebrush. They were also more abundant in sagebrush (regardless of grazing treatment) than sites dominated by introduced crested wheatgrass following sagebrush removal, possibly because there was more bare ground available in the sage habitat, which could facilitate the

ability to bask and move quickly while hunting or escaping predators. The preference for areas with a significant shrub component, >40% bare ground, and <5% grass cover has also been observed in Oregon (Green et al. 2001), who also noted habitat loss in the region of their study due to proliferation of invasive plants and conversion of shrub-steppe to cropland. Hammerson (1999) suggested that rangeland “improvements” for livestock, involving sagebrush removal to promote grass communities, could result in local population declines in Colorado.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. More thorough documentation of the species’ presence across its range in Montana is needed, especially along the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers and the region between them to determine potential connectivity among apparently isolated populations.
2. Studies of habitat use and population dynamics as they relate to livestock grazing, agricultural activities (including CRP lands), and surface mine reclamation are needed to identify species responses to these habitat perturbations and develop effective mitigation measures.
3. Measures should be taken to prevent invasion of rock outcrop and barren ground habitats by weeds such as Japanese Brome (*Bromus tectorum*) which reduce basking and foraging habitat.
4. The impacts of motor vehicles should be examined where populations are found in close proximity to areas of high human use. This pertains especially to any areas where off-road vehicle use is permitted.

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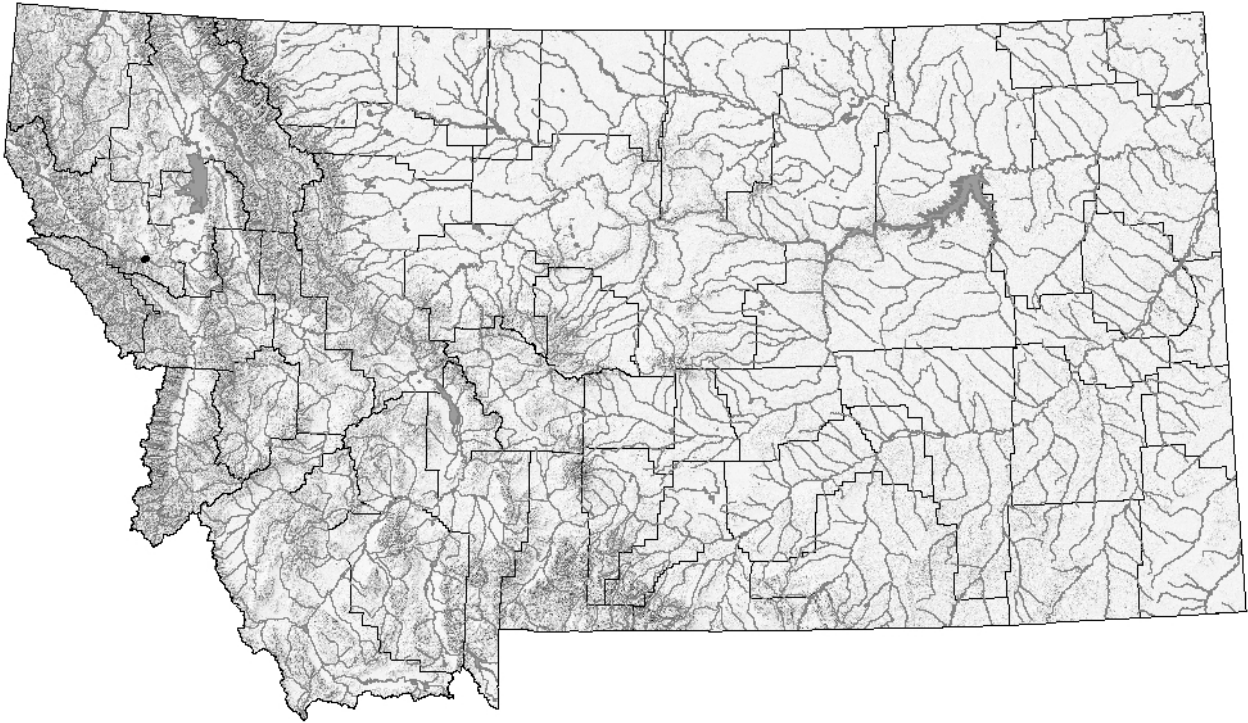
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Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The western fence lizard is a member of a large genus of North American lizards found from Panama to the Canadian border. The closest relatives include five additional species in the *Udulatus* group (Wiens and Reeder 1997). The western fence lizard occurs from northern Washington, south through Oregon, southwestern Idaho, Nevada, western Utah, and most of California, into Mexico to northwestern Baja California, at elevations from sea level in Washington, Oregon, and California to 3,300 m (10,800 ft) in California (Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003). Six subspecies are currently recognized. The subspecies present in Montana is the northwestern fence lizard (*S. o. occidentalis*), which is found along the Cascade Mountains. In Montana, there is a single known population, along the lower Flathead River near Perma on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Sanders County (Werner 2008, Werner et al. 2004). The Montana population is isolated east of the main range of the species by about 250 km (150 miles). It is unknown for certain whether this population is native or introduced, but it seems likely that the population was introduced via a train because a major rail line is immediately adjacent to the population and the population seems to be expanding (Werner 2008).

Maximum Elevation

762 m (2,500 ft) in Sanders County (Werner et al. 2004).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are white, leathery, and oval, about 14 mm (0.5 in) long and 8 mm (0.3 in) wide. Clutch size is usually 4-17 eggs (averaging about 8). Clutches are laid in loose soil in shallow cavities

(Nussbaum et al. 1983, Werner et al. 2004).

Juveniles and Adults:

The body is somewhat narrow and elongate. The back is grayish overall, and covered with pointed, keeled scales, giving the body a prickly appearance. There are 5-10 rows of dark brown or black, checkered or V-shaped, rows or bands running across the back, and there may be a light-colored border to the back edges of the bars. Dark and light patches dot the sides of the body, and the rear surfaces of the legs have some pale yellow or orange coloration. There are large solid blue lateral abdominal patches, with a matching solid blue throat. Males have larger, more intense blue patches, sometimes lacking in females, and have black or dark gray bordering the blue areas. Young animals have little or no blue on the abdomen and throat, and are in coloration like adult females, hatchlings also lack the yellow or orange on the legs (St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003, Werner et al. 2004). Maximum snout-vent length is about 9.5 cm for both sexes. Maximum total length is about 18 cm, with the tail length about equal to the snout-vent length. Mature females and males are roughly of equal size. Hatchlings are 2.2-2.8 cm snout-vent length, but otherwise adult-like in appearance (Davis 1967, Tanner and Hopkin 1972, Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Similar Species:

The western fence lizard differs from the common sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*) by having a checkered pattern of darker triangular blotches in rows or bars across the back rather than pale dorsolateral stripes. The dorsal scales of the common sagebrush lizard are also much less prickly and pointed and the blue throat patch in males is less pronounced than in the western fence lizard. The northern alligator lizard has a prominent skin fold on the side of the body and short legs. The western skink has smooth, shiny, and flat dorsal scales, and juvenile and young adult skinks have conspicuous blue tails. Western fence lizards have keeled scales that give the body a prickly appearance; the scales are not flattened and shiny, and they never have a blue tail. The western fence lizard lacks the broad flattened body and fringe of prominent spines on each side of the body that are present in the greater short-horned lizard (St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003, Werner et al. 2004). Western fence lizard, northern alligator lizard, and western skink are found only in northwestern Montana west of the Continental Divide, while the common sagebrush lizard and greater short-horned lizard are present in Montana only east of the Divide (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

The western fence lizard is an animal of shrub-steppe habitats and open mixed deciduous and conifer forests, absent only from shady dense forest and extremely arid desert (Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003). In northern California adults were often present in areas with some shade, in open pine forest under trees and shrubs (manzanita), but also off the ground in trees and shrubs, and also were found on or near rocks (Marcellini and Mackey 1970). Juveniles frequented grassy areas more than adults, but climbed less and were found less often under trees. All ages favored areas with rocks and fallen logs and other objects upon which to bask or under which they sought refuge. In central California, western fence lizards tended to avoid grasslands, were present in low numbers in dense, short-stature oak woodland, were more abundant in larger stature oak woodland with grassland clearings, and favored large-stature oak woodland with large fallen logs and abundant downed wood (Davis and Ford 1983). In southern

California, in an area of recently burned chaparral (*Quercus*, *Adenostoma*, *Ceanothus*), individuals often were found perching on charred branches, perhaps to enhance concealment from predators (Lillywhite and North 1974). In Nevada, western fence lizards were found in areas of basalt cap rock dominated by piñon-juniper habitat with shallow soils, but also many rock outcrops; oak, skunkbush, and sagebrush were dominant shrubby species (Tanner and Hopkin 1972). Habitat use in Montana has not been the subject of study. The only known site along the Flathead River is an area of rocky terrain dominated by shrubby vegetation (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004, pers. comm.). Favored areas throughout the range appear to have a high percentage of open bare ground and a component of low to tall shrubs or trees, as well as rocks and the presence of downed woody material. Although a ground dweller, the western fence lizard will often perch above ground in low shrubs and trees; adults tend to perch higher than juveniles, and perch height is higher off the ground at lower elevation sites (Marcellini and Mackey 1970, Adolph 1990). Home ranges may be relatively small, with a maximum in Nevada of about 6,750 m² (1.67 acres) for adult males and 1950 m² (0.48 acres) for adult females (Tanner and Hopkin 1972); mean home ranges for males and females, respectively, were 2390 m² (0.59 acres) and 385 m² (0.095 acres). Mean home ranges for all age classes in central California were < 150 m² (Davis and Ford 1983). Home range size among sites is influenced by habitat structure, among other factors, which differed greatly between the two cited studies. Across much of the range, eggs are laid during late April-July (Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003). Egg laying in the laboratory by females from a moderate-elevation site in Nevada occurred in late June and early July (Tanner and Hopkin 1972), and a study females from a low-elevation site in southern California contained oviducal eggs from April to July (Goldberg 1973). Smaller females produce only 1-2 clutches per year, but larger females at low elevation sites may produce 3 clutches (Goldberg 1973). Clutch size is as few as 4 eggs but may be as large as 15; mean size of 15 clutches from Nevada was 11.2 eggs, with a range of 7-15 (Tanner and Hopkin 1972). Eggs hatch in 50-60 days, mostly in early to mid-August in Nevada and central California but continuing into late September in favorable years (Davis 1967, Tanner and Hopkin 1972, Nussbaum et al 1983). No information is available from Montana on any aspect of the reproductive biology of this species, although multiple age classes are present at the only occupied site, indicating successful reproduction has occurred (Maxell et al. 2003). Sexual maturity is attained in the spring of the second year, following the second hibernation (Tanner and Hopkin 1972, Nussbaum et al. 1983). Young adults breed and lay their first clutch when 21-23 months old. Mean annual survival rate of young and adults is probably quite variable; in Nevada, survival of marked juveniles was estimated to be about 28% (Tanner and Hopkin 1972). Males and females in central California and Nevada can live to five or more years (Davis 1967, Tanner and Hopkins 1972). Adults and juveniles are “sit-and-wait” predators that hunt mainly by sight, but they also run and leap after flying insects (Tanner and Hopkin 1972). The diversity of food items taken indicates prey is taken largely opportunistically. Ants were the most abundant dietary items in Nevada (Tanner and Hopkin 1972), but beetles, Lepidoptera larvae, true flies, crickets and grasshoppers, true bugs, as well as spiders and the occasional scorpion, were taken. A similar diversity of arthropod prey is represented in stomach analyses of western fence lizards from central and northern California, and southeastern Oregon (Johnson 1965, Rose 1976, Whitaker and Maser 1981).

Status and Conservation

At the time the comprehensive summaries of amphibians and reptiles in Montana (Maxell et al.

2003, Werner et al. 2004) were published, there was only one documented site in Montana for western fence lizard, discovered in 2002 near Perma, Sanders County. This remains the only documented population as of 2008 (Werner 2008). The Montana population is isolated by about 250 km (150 miles) from the nearest populations in Washington and Idaho. It seems likely that the population was introduced via a train because a major rail line is immediately adjacent to the population and the population seems to be expanding (Werner 2008). Another indication that this population is not native is the fact that an earlier survey of the Flathead Indian Reservation (Werner et al. 1998) failed to document this lizard species, even though several of the survey sites were in the Lower Flathead River area. Additional surveys along the lower Flathead River and genetic evaluation of the population to determine its status as native or introduced are both important conservation measures that need to be taken. If the population is introduced, control measures should be inacted as soon as possible while the population is small. If the population is determined to possibly be native, then protective measures should be put in place as soon as possible. Few studies address or identify risk factors. Western fence lizard can persist in recently burned chaparral areas (Lillywhite and North 1974), indicating a level of tolerance for extreme habitat disturbance. However, alterations to rangelands could influence grass and exotic weed encroachment, which could increase the deleterious effects of fire on western fence lizard populations. Their preference for rocky sites could help buffer them from some negative effects of fire. Use of chemical pest control agents for weeds and insects could negatively impact directly or indirectly their preferred arthropod prey.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all general risk factors described above, with the exception of water impoundments/recreational facilities and harvest/commerce.
2. More thorough surveys for western fence lizard across its possible range in Montana, especially along the Lower Flathead and Lower Clark Fork rivers, are needed to determine the native status of the species in the state.
3. Genetic samples from the Lower Flathead River population should be compared to similar material in Idaho and Washington to help determine if the population is native or introduced. If the population is determined to possibly be native, then protective measures should be put in place as soon as possible. If genetic information indicates the population is introduced, control measures should be inacted as soon as possible while the population is small. Any eradication program will need to be done with the approval of the Tribal Council of the Flathead Indian Reservation, and in conjunction with tribal biologists.
4. Studies of habitat use, population size, and population dynamics of this population are of interest, regardless of the native status of the population. If the population is indeed introduced, these studies could help determine how well a population of this species can adapt to environmental conditions that lie outside its normal range.

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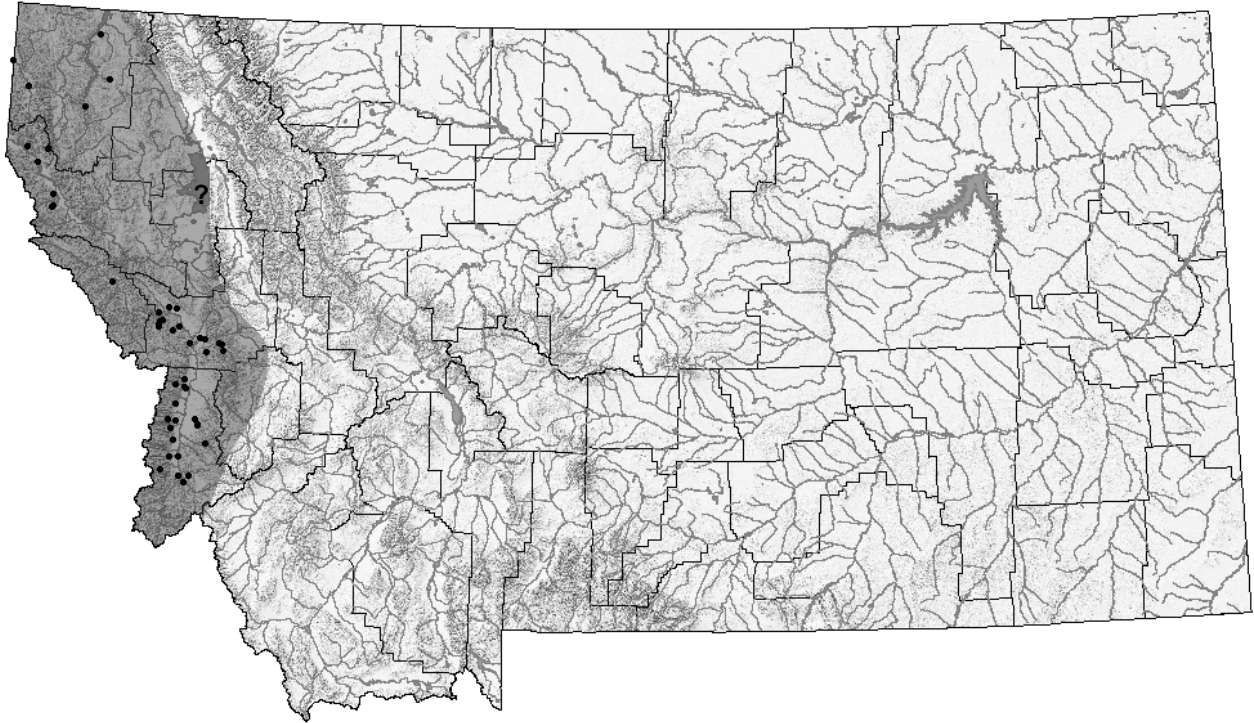
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Western Skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The western skink is the most widespread, and possibly the most abundant, skink in western North America, being found west of the Continental Divide from southern British Columbia in the north, south through eastern Washington, Idaho, western Montana, Oregon, northern and coastal California, Nevada, western Utah, northwestern Arizona, and southwestern California, to northern Baja California (Rodgers and Fitch 1947, Tanner 1988, Richmond and Reeder 2002), at elevations to about 2530 m (8300 ft). Four subspecies are sometimes recognized (Tanner 1988, Stebbins 2003): *Eumeces skiltonianus skiltonianus* in the northern Rocky Mountains and Pacific Coast, *E. s. utahensis* in the core of the Great Basin, *E. s. interparietalis* of extreme southwest California and northern Baja California, and *E. s. lagunensis* isolated in the southern half of Baja California. Recent analyses of genetic and morphological traits from throughout the range of the western skink (Richmond and Reeder 2002) support the validity of the earlier classification of Tanner (1957), with three subspecies of western skink and the isolated subspecies *E. s. lagunensis* of southern Baja California considered a full species, the San Lucan skink (*E. lagunensis*). The form of western skink so far documented in Montana is Skilton's skink (*E. s. skiltonianus*), although the Great Basin skink (*E. s. utahensis*) is present in parts of Idaho abutting Beaverhead County, where suitable habitat occurs on both sides of the state boundary (Maxell et al. 2003). In Montana, there are about 50 records from five counties west of the Continental Divide; reports from Flathead County need verification (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004). Given the species known distribution in Idaho, it is possible that the species is present in portions of Beaverhead County.

Maximum Elevation

1,707 m (5,600 ft) in Missoula County (Ortega and Pearson 2001, Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are white, leathery, oval, and about 12-15 mm in length. Clutch size is typically 2-6 eggs, but up to 10 may be laid (Tanner 1957, Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003).

Eggs are laid in a cavity in the ground under a rock or log, and are guarded by the female.

Juveniles and Adults:

The body of the western skink is slender and elongate, with a tail that is about as long as the remainder of the body. The body is covered in smooth and rounded scales, and has an overall shiny appearance. Dorsal coloration consists of brown, black, and golden-yellow or cream-colored longitudinal stripes that extend from the nose to the anterior portion of the tail. Young animals are similar in appearance to adults, but have a brilliant blue tail that becomes progressively duller with age. The belly is light gray to cream-colored, with faint greenish-blue mottling. Males develop reddish-orange coloration on the chin and sides of head during the breeding season. Adults are about 5.0-8.0 cm snout-vent length and up to 19.0 cm total length (Tanner 1957, St. John 2002, Stebbins 2003, Werner et al. 2004). Some individuals may have a stumpy tail, resulting from tail autotomy in response to predator attack (Vitt et al. 1977, St. John 2002, Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.).

Similar Species:

The western skink is the only lizard in Montana with a body that appears smooth and shiny, and whose tail is blue in juveniles and young adults. Western skinks lack a skin fold on the side of the body (present in the northern alligator lizard with which it is sympatric), and keeled scales (present on greater short-horned lizard, northern sagebrush lizard, and western fence lizard). Other Montana lizards do not display distinct dorsal stripes, which are present on the western skink (St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

The western skink occupies grasslands, chaparral, open juniper-sage shrublands, piñon-juniper woodlands, pine-oak forests, and mixed conifer forest. Grassy openings and rocky areas near streams in the above habitats are frequented, where western skinks often found under dried leaves, flat rocks, and other ground cover (Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002), but dry hillsides with some shading are also occupied. It can also be found in downed decaying wood. This lizard tends to be less abundant in dense shrub cover (Tanner 1957), although it may forage in such sites. They do not appear to inhabit areas with deep soils or sand, although both sexes dig burrows that may be up to 50 cm long. Habitat use in Montana has been little studied. In Sanders County, western skinks were found in open stands of ponderosa pine in or near talus, and at meadow edges (Boundy 2001). In Mineral, Missoula, and Ravalli counties, skinks were found in *Agropyron spicatum*-*Poa sandbergii* grasslands on southwest aspects. These sites were gently rolling (< 20% slope) with imbedded rocky areas, to rocky and steep terrain (average slope of 30%) with scattered ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, imbedded in a matrix of montane coniferous forest (Ortega and Pearson 2001). Many of these occupied sites supported moderate to high densities of exotic spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*). Home range size has not

been reported, but females probably restrict movement to small areas once eggs are laid, as they often remain with their clutches until eggs hatch (Tanner 1943, 1957). Western skinks appear to be somewhat gregarious, further suggesting that home ranges may be relatively small, although this species does not seem to be territorial (Tanner 1957). Mating in parts of Utah occurs through May and into June, a few weeks after emergence from winter dormancy (Tanner 1957). Eggs are laid in Utah during the first two weeks of July. Timing of egg laying in coastal California is similar to Utah (Rodgers and Memmler 1943), although some clutches are laid by mid- and late June (Van Denburgh 1922, Tanner 1943, 1957). A single clutch is produced (Fitch 1970). The number of eggs in eight Utah clutches was 2-5, but as many as ten eggs have been reported (St. John 2002). Eggs hatch in at least 30 days (Rodgers and Memmler 1943), in August and September, with an estimated full incubation period of 40-60 days (Werner et al. 2004). No information is available from Montana on any aspect of the reproductive biology of this species; adults and juveniles have been reported from early April to October (Werner and Reichel 1994, Hendricks and Reichel 1996, Boundy 2001, Ortega and Pearson 2001). In Utah, males reach sexual maturity when two years old (Tanner 1957), and apparently so do females. There appears to be no size dimorphism between the sexes, although males appear to have longer legs (Rodgers and Fitch 1947). No information is available on survival rate and longevity of western skinks, but reproducing once per season (Fitch 1970) suggests that they may be relatively long-lived (Vitt et al. 1977). Adults and juveniles actively forage, albeit haltingly and in a "cat-like" stalk (Tanner 1957, Nussbaum et al. 1983, St. John 2002), hunting mainly by sight and remaining near cover. Arthropods form the diet. Several orders of insects (including beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, and moths) as well as spiders, centipedes, and sow bugs (terrestrial isopods) are taken (Tanner 1957), although ants are rarely consumed.

Status and Conservation

At the time the comprehensive summaries of amphibians and reptiles in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003, Werner et al. 2004) were published, there were 51 total records for western skink from five counties west of the Continental Divide, with records concentrated near the Idaho state line. With so few records, the current status in Montana is largely uncertain. The western skink has not been documented in or near Glacier National Park (Brunson and Demaree 1951, Marnell 1997), and the few reports from the Flathead Valley require verification (Werner et al. 1998). There is also a noticeable absence of records north of the Kootenai River in Lincoln County, and east of Missoula and Ravalli counties, despite seemingly suitable habitat in both regions. At the local scale, limited data from elsewhere suggest this species is relatively sedentary and gregarious (Tanner 1957). Thus, populations appear vulnerable to habitat fragmentation. Densities of this species have not been determined, but trapping data indicate they may sometimes be locally fairly abundant (Ortega and Pearson 2001). Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include habitat loss/fragmentation, fire, road and trail development, quarrying, and use of pesticides and herbicides. However, perhaps the greatest risk to maintaining viable populations of western skink in Montana is the lack of baseline data on its distribution, status, habitat use, and basic biology (Maxell and Hokit 1999), which are needed to monitor trends and recognize dramatic declines when and where they occur. Few studies address or identify risk factors. In Utah, western skinks appeared to decline at sites following dramatic increase in sagebrush cover (Tanner 1957). Some open terrain is needed to allow sunlight to warm shelter and nesting cover of flattened rocks and wood. However, some vegetative cover appears to be required for shelter while foraging. Invasion of exotic weeds into

occupied habitat has and continues to occur in western Montana (Ortega and Pearson 2001), but it is unclear how associated habitat changes may affect skink populations. Use of chemical agents to control weed and insect pest infestations could depress populations of skinks, which feed on ground-dwelling arthropods.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. See research and management suggestions under all general risk factors described above, with the exception of water impoundments/recreational facilities and harvest/commerce.
2. More thorough documentation of western skink presence across its range in Montana is needed, especially north of the Kootenai River, the Flathead Valley, and the region east of Missoula and Ravalli counties. All of northwestern Montana needs focused surveys to determine potential connectivity among possibly isolated populations.
3. Studies of habitat use and population dynamics are needed, especially as they relate to livestock grazing, logging, sagebrush and juniper encroachment, and agricultural practices, to identify species responses to these habitat perturbations and develop effective measures for mitigation of negative impacts.
4. Reduction of sagebrush cover to promote grass growth for livestock should be avoided or carefully assessed in areas occupied by the western skink. Dense grass growth increases the likelihood that fire will kill shrub cover, perhaps making the impacted area unsuitable for occupancy by western skinks. However, moderate grazing may be beneficial to shrub and meadow habitats favored by this species, by preventing shrub cover from becoming too dense. When and where shrub cover manipulation is deemed desirable, it should be conducted in a way to retain a mosaic of cover conditions, including the presence of moderately tall shrubs (sagebrush in particular) at a relatively fine scale, to accommodate habitat requirements in home ranges that are fairly small. Ground cover of rocks and woody debris should be maintained.
5. The affects of application of insecticides and herbicides need to be determined, as use of these chemicals could severely impact lizard populations by eliminating a significant portion of their prey. Monitoring of skink populations in areas already impacted by exotic weeds in very desirable.

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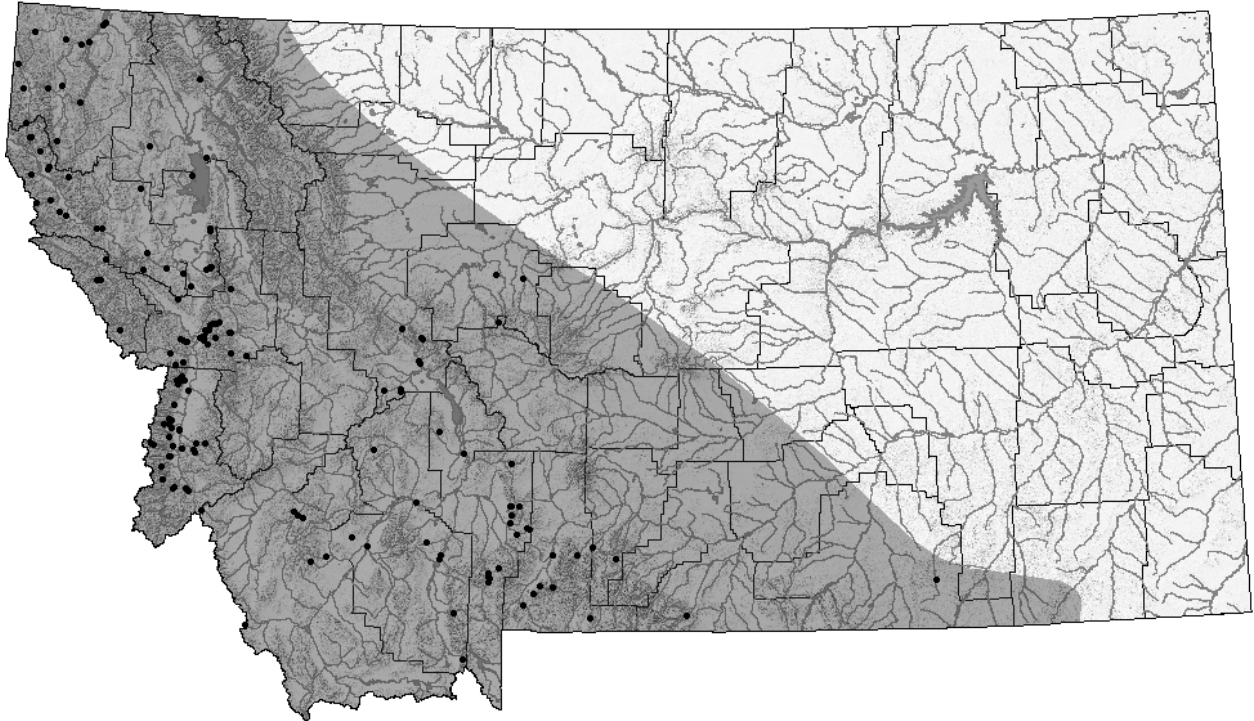
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Rubber Boa (*Charina bottae*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The rubber boa ranges from the northern Rocky Mountains west to the Pacific coast and south into California, Nevada and portions of Utah (Stewart 1977, Werner et al. 2004). Three subspecies of rubber boa are recognized, although there has been considerable debate about subspecies designations (Nussbaum and Hoyer 1974, Stewart 1977, Rodriguez-Robles et al. 2001). Of the three subspecies, only the Northern rubber boa (*Charina bottae bottae*) occurs in Montana. The species has been documented in 16 western counties and was also recently documented in eastern Bighorn County, a 185 km range extension from the previous eastern most record near Red Lodge.

Maximum Elevation

2,200 m (7,220 ft) in Madison County (Lynda Saul, pers. com., MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Neonates:

Newborns are lighter in color than adults and are typically tan/pink dorsally with a yellow/cream ventral side. Newborns weigh 7-8 g and total length averages 215 mm (8.5 in.) (Erwin 1964, Hoyer 1974, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Werner et al. 2004).

Juveniles and Adults:

Total length ranges from 36-71 cm (14-28 in.) with females reaching greater lengths than males (Russell and Bauer 2000, Werner et al. 2004). Dorsal coloration is typically brown, tan or even olive fading to yellow ventrally sometimes with orange, brown or black mottling. Key features of the rubber boa are the uniformly wide body and blunt, wedge-shaped head. Small uniform scales

and chin shields relatively identical in size to adjacent scales are also key features. Tail is short ending in a rounded plate. Downward facing anal spurs (remnant hind limbs) on each side of the cloacal opening are well-developed in males and in females the spurs typically project straight toward the rear. Eyes are small with vertical pupils and there are 9-11 upper labial (lip) scales (Nussbaum and Hoyer 1974, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Russell and Bauer 2000, Werner et al. 2004).

Similar species:

The rubber boa's uniform, tube-like shape and coloration easily distinguishes this species from other snakes in Montana.

Habitat use/Natural History

Rubber boas can be found under rocks, logs, and by searching through rotting stumps (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Werner et al. 2004) and also under man-made debris such as boards, metal roofing, and cardboard (Hoyer 1974, Hoyer and Stewart 2000a). Individuals have even been observed climbing trees and swimming (Russell and Bauer 2000, St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004). Rubber boas are most associated with forested habitats in Montana, however, use of non-forested habitats has been recorded in other regions (Hoyer 1974, Nussbaum et al. 1983). Most records of rubber boas in Montana are close to areas with high human densities and the species may be more common than previously thought (Maxell et al. 2003). Activity occurs from April-October even in temperatures as low as 10° C (50° F). Rubber boas hibernate for the remainder of the year and although accounts are limited, hibernacula were found in rock outcroppings in California (Hoyer and Stewart 2000a) and St. John (2002) discovered communal hibernation even in sawdust piles. Rubber boas breed in the spring and young are live-born between late summer and early fall with litters ranging from 2-8 (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Russell and Bauer 2000, Werner et al. 2004). The time required to reach sexual maturity is unknown, however, Werner et al. (2004) report that individuals with a total length ≥ 360 mm (14 in.) can breed and Nussbaum et al. (1983) state that maturity is reached at lengths ≥ 450 mm (18 in.) for females and 545 mm (21.5 in.) for males in Oregon. Most foraging occurs at night and the diet consists largely of small mammals that they kill through constriction (Rodriguez-Robles et al. 1999, Hoyer and Stewart 2000b). Rubber boas are especially effective at locating and consuming nests of young rodents (Rodriguez-Robles 1999) even using their tail to fend off adult mice when preying on the nestlings (Hoyer 1974, Hoyer and Stewart 2000b). The tail may also be used as defense against other predators such as raptors and weasels (Werner et al. 2004). Little is known about the life history of rubber boas in the wild, however, individuals in captivity can live for more than 18 years (Werner et al. 2004).

Status and Conservation

Observations of rubber boas in Montana are rare, but are often associated with areas of human activity, indicating that this cryptic species is relatively common and is just observed relatively infrequently. There is little research that addresses the conservation status or impacts of anthropogenic disturbances to rubber boas in Montana. For example, no studies have assessed the potential impacts of habitat alteration to rubber boas. Individual studies that specifically identify risk factors or other issues relevant to the conservation of rubber boas include the following: (1) Specimens have been collected as a result of roadway mortality (Ortenburger 1921), but we do not know the level of impact roads may have on rubber boa populations. Roadways have been shown to have negative impacts to other reptile and amphibian populations

(Maxell and Hokit 1999) but research that has linked roadways to population level parameters typically involved species concentrated within a particular habitat, such as frogs and turtles near ponds (Maxell and Hokit 1999). Roadways could have negative impacts in areas where rubber boas are highly concentrated, such as adjacent to hibernacula. Snake mortality on roadways, at times in great numbers, has been documented widely with some drivers even purposely swerving to kill snakes (Langley et al. 1989, Krivda 1993, Rosen and Lowe 1994, Hammerson 1999). Negative impacts to herpetofauna from off-road vehicle (ORV) use have been documented. Both reptiles and their associated prey were less abundant in areas with high ORV use compared to areas with no ORV use (Maxell and Hokit 1999). (2) Generally, snakes near human population centers or areas with high levels of recreational use can experience mortality from humans, predation from pets or even predation from small carnivores that can exist at higher densities near human concentrations (Maxell and Hokit 1999). Stuart et al. (2001) found snakes entangled in plastic netting that is commonly used to protect fruit trees and gardens from pests. (3) Although the rubber boa is extremely docile and non-venomous, a general lack of knowledge about snakes coupled with deeply anchored fears sometimes leads humans to destroy snakes on sight, regardless of the species (Dodd 1993, Maxell and Hokit 1999). (4) Chemical contamination may adversely affect snakes (Werner et al. 2004). However, changes in agricultural practices and federal laws can sometimes mitigate these impacts. For example, DDT levels in snakes have declined since the banning of the pesticide (Fleet and Plapp 1978). Snakes may bioaccumulate pollutants and may be used as valuable bioindicators of overall environmental health (Bauerle et al. 1975, Stafford et al. 1976, Anderson 1977).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Overwintering habits of rubber boas should be investigated to ascertain whether they hibernate communally and if so what the characteristics of these hibernation sites are in Montana.
2. If future research delineates characteristics of rubber boa hibernacula sites, efforts should be made to avoid these sites when constructing roads and ORV trails.
3. The lack of research on wild rubber boa ecology is startling. Research that explores any aspect of wild rubber boa ecology would enhance our understanding of this species. Studies that explore foraging behavior, dispersal, survival, and breeding habits would be most beneficial initially.
4. Outreach programs that provide the public with scientifically accurate and lucid information about snakes should be encouraged and supported whenever possible.

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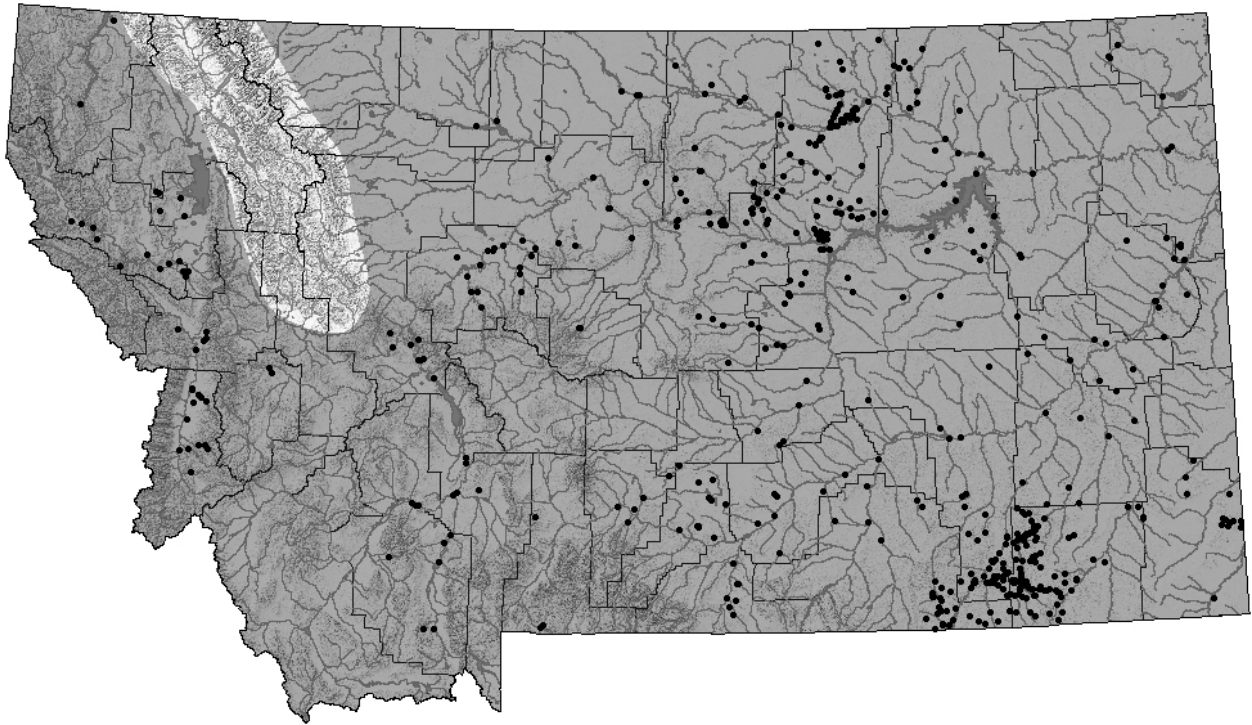
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Eastern Racer (*Coluber constrictor*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

As its common name implies, much of the range of the eastern racer is in the eastern United States. However, it is found across the midwest and portions of the Dakotas linking it to Montana into the pacific northwest and southern British Columbia. Fringes and pockets of eastern racers are also found in California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico (Wilson 1978, Hammerson 1999, Russell and Bauer 2000, Werner et al. 2004). Currently there are 11 subspecies of *Coluber constrictor* recognized but only *C. c. flaviventris*, the eastern yellow-bellied racer, has been confirmed in Montana. Most records of this species in Montana are from the eastern part of the state and the drier valleys of western Montana (Maxell et al. 2003).

Maximum Elevation

2,012 m (6,600 ft) in Madison County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

Slender with uniform blue, gray, or olive coloration and smooth scales dorsally and yellow coloration ventrally. Underside of chin is white or cream and eyes are large with round pupils (Werner et al. 2004). Adult racers range 58-122 cm (23-48 in.) in total length and females are typically larger than males. There are 7-8 upper and 9-10 lower labial (lip) scales.

Neonates:

Newborn racers have a series of red/brown blotches dorsally interspersed with lighter colored scales and smaller brown spots along their sides giving them a banded appearance. Newborns average 33 cm (13 in.) in total length and weigh approximately 5.5 g (Swain and Smith 1978, Werner et al. 2004). When young racers reach a total length of approximately 69 cm (27 inches) in their second year this banded appearance fades into uniform adult coloration (Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004).

Eggs:

White, oval with a granular surface. Eggs are approximately 33 mm (1.3 in.) in length by 19 mm (0.75 in.) in width and are laid in groups of about 9-12, however, clutch size can vary widely (Hammerson 1999, Russell and Bauer 2000, Werner et al. 2004) and is closely correlated with female body length (Rosen 1991). Swain and Smith (1978) found an average weight of 8.7 g/egg for 89 eggs in Colorado.

Similar species:

Because of their banded appearance juvenile eastern racers can be confused with gophersnakes (*Pituophis catenifer*), however, gophersnakes have keeled scales (ridged scales).

Habitat use/Natural History

Eastern racers are typically found in open habitat including prairie, sagebrush, badlands, and valley bottom grasslands (Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). While racers are largely terrestrial, inhabiting rodent burrows and spaces under rocks, boards, and vegetation during spring and summer, they have also been observed climbing shrubs and trees and even swimming (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Racers are active from late April to October (Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004) and are most active during the day when the sun can warm body temperatures to approximately 30° C (86° F) (Plummer and Congdon 1996, Werner et al. 2004). Hibernation lasts from late October through April and is often communal and can even occur with other snake species (Swain and Smith 1978, Hammerson 1999). Hibernacula have been found in rock piles, talus, and even abandoned wells and home foundations (Brown and Parker 1976, Herrington 1988, Hammerson 1999). Racers breed after emerging from hibernation in the spring and subsequent dispersal distance to summer range averaged 339 m (1,113 ft) in a population of *C.c. flaviventris* in Kansas (Brown and Parker 1976). Brown and Parker (1976) found average dispersal distances from hibernacula to summer ranges for *C.c. mormon* in Utah averaged 289 m (948 ft) and 739 m (2,425 ft) during 1966 and 1971-1972, respectively. Roughly 90% of adult females lay eggs in late-June/early July (Hammerson 1999) and the females may deposit eggs in shallow burrows, abandoned rodent burrows, or rotting logs (Porchuk and Brooks 1995, Brown and Parker 1976, Hammerson 1999). Swain and Smith (1978) even found a communal nest with over 100 eggs under a large rock in Colorado. Eggs will hatch in late August/early September and growth of hatchlings is best in years with abundant precipitation. Individuals can breed in their second spring, however, most females will deposit their first clutch of eggs at age four (Hammerson 1999). Survival over the hibernation period is high (>90%), but on average 60% of adults survive annually with only 20% of juveniles surviving their first year (Hammerson 1999). Racers forage widely using rapid locomotion to locate prey (Herzog and Burghardt 1974, Plummer and Congdon 1996). Mean home range size for racers in Kansas was 2.9 ha (7.2 ac) and 1.8 ha (4.5 ac) for males and

females, respectively. Rosen (1991) found that larger *C.c. foxii* moved farther between relocations than did smaller individuals, indicating that larger racers had larger home ranges possibly due to increased energetic demands. Largely opportunistic, racers consume their prey alive and without constriction as their scientific name suggests (Werner et al. 2004). Small mammals, grasshoppers, crickets, amphibians, and birds are all consumed by racers (Schonberger 1945, Rosen 1991, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Racers have even been documented eating other snake species (Hammerson 1999). Red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) have been observed killing racers and it is likely that a suite of other animals prey on racers as well (Hammerson 1999). Racers can be relatively long-lived in the wild with a small percentage of individuals within a population ≥ 10 years old (Hammerson 1999).

Status and Conservation

Eastern racers are common and have been documented in 40 counties and on both sides of the Continental Divide in Montana (Maxell et al. 2003). There is some debate whether *C.c. flaviventris* occurs east of the divide and *C.c. mormon* occurs west of the divide, however, research has not been conducted to ascertain whether this separation, or integration, occurs (Maxell et al. 2003). Similar to other species of snakes, eastern racers may be negatively impacted by disturbance to their hibernacula. Because they are ectothermic, snakes do not respond to human disturbance as effectively at cooler temperatures, such as the overwintering period, than they would at warmer temperatures (Prior and Weatherhead 1994). In addition, because eastern racers can concentrate in large numbers and display substantial site fidelity year after year (Brown and Parker 1976, Swain and Smith 1978), they can be impacted by even small, localized disturbance if it occurs near hibernacula or nesting sites. For example, roadways and off-road vehicle (ORV) use may impact eastern racers if they occur near hibernacula or intersect movement to such areas. Snake mortality on roadways, at times in great numbers, has been documented widely with some drivers even purposely swerving to kill snakes (Langley et al. 1989, Krivda 1993, Rosen and Lowe 1994). In general, snakes near human population centers or areas with high levels of recreational use can experience mortality from humans, predation from pets or even predation from small carnivores that can exist at higher densities near human concentrations (Maxell and Hokit 1999). Although eastern racers are not venomous, they can bite when provoked (Degenhardt et al. 1996) and a general lack of knowledge about snakes coupled with deeply anchored fears sometimes leads humans to destroy snakes on sight, regardless of the species (Dodd 1993, Maxell and Hokit 1999). In addition, popular large-scale rattlesnake roundups are known to kill not only thousands of the targeted species, but also many other incidental species including racers (Weir 1992). Near homes and construction sites plastic netting, commonly used to protect fruit trees and gardens from pests, has also been found to entangle and kill racers (Stuart et al. 2001). Although eastern racers are beneficial to farmers through consumption of agricultural pests and possibly disease control, mowing has been shown to kill large numbers of eastern racers (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Chemical contamination may adversely affect snakes (Werner et al. 2004), however changes in agricultural practices and federal laws can sometimes mitigate these impacts. For example, DDT levels in snakes have declined since the banning of the pesticide (Fleet and Plapp 1978). Snakes may harbor pollutants indicative of overall environmental health (Bauerle et al. 1975, Stafford et al. 1976, Anderson 1977), thereby adding to the value of their conservation and persistence. In addition, rattlesnakes consume deer mice and other rodents which may help

control the spread of harmful viruses such as hantavirus (Degenhardt et al. 1996).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. If location is known, protect hibernation and nesting sites from disturbance or destruction.
2. Whenever possible, avoid disturbance to talus, rock piles, and outcroppings.
3. Outreach programs that provide the public with scientifically accurate and lucid information about snakes should be encouraged and supported whenever possible.
4. Research that addresses genetic distinctions and distribution of *C.c. flaviventris* and *C.c. mormon* in Montana would be beneficial.

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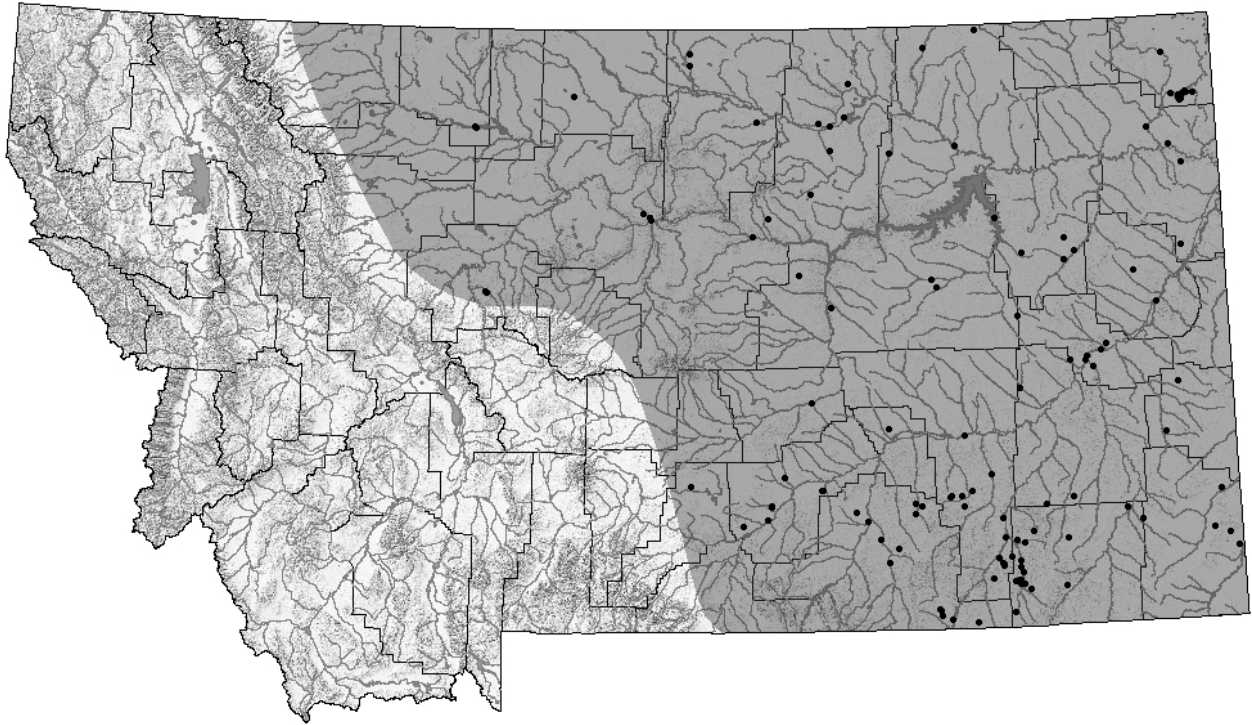
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Western Hog-nosed Snake (*Heterodon nasicus*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The Western Hog-nosed Snake is primarily found in the northern Great Plains, ranging from southern Alberta southward along to northeastern New Mexico and northern Oklahoma, and northeasterly to Illinois, Wisconsin, and northwestern Indiana, and northwesterly to southern Manitoba (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Of the three subspecies of Western Hog-nosed Snake found in North America the subspecies that occurs in Montana is *Heterodon nasicus nasicus*. The remaining two subspecies occur well to the south of Montana from southwestern New Mexico south into Mexico and in Missouri. *H. n. nasicus* is distributed primarily along the major river corridors in the Great Plains region of eastern and north-central Montana (Werner et al. 2004). In Montana, there are about 58 records from 28 counties east of the Continental Divide.

Maximum Elevation

1,286 m (4220 ft) in Cascade County (Gerald Painter, pers. com., MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

The Western Hog-nosed Snake is a stout, heavy bodied species with a snout that is upturned much like a digging spade or trowel. The dorsal scales are keeled with 23 or fewer rows of dorsal scales at midbody (Hammerson 1999). The underside of the tail is primarily black and the prefrontal scales are separated by small scales. Total length for males in Kansas averages 55 cm and 65 cm for females. Maximum TL is 154 cm (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Males typically have 35 or more grayish brown, deep cinnamon, or chocolate brown blotches along mid dorsal line between head and vent while females may have greater than 40 blotches (Walley and Eckerman 1999, Hammerson 1999). The anal plate and subcaudals are divided, while ventrals range from 129-147

in males and 139-156 in females (Walley and Eckerman 1999).

Neonates:

Hatchlings are resemble adults in pattern but are generally brighter in color. They measure 14-20 cm total body length (Ernst and Ernst (2003).

Eggs:

Eggs are primarily not adherent, white, and smooth and between 26-38 mm long and 14-23 mm wide (Platt 1969, Iverson 1995 in Hammerson). Eggs are typically deposited in July in a shallow excavation.

Similar Species:

The Prairie Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*) and the Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*) have a similar banded or blotched body pattern. However, *H. nasicus* has a unique and distinctive upturned snout and lacks a rattle.

Habitat Use/Natural History

The Western Hog-nosed Snake prefers plains and savannahs with well drained sandy or gravelly soil where it can easily burrow or dig out prey. Populations throughout the species range appear to be highly correlated with coarse alluvial and marine soils/deposits (Eckerman 1996). Where soils are appropriate *H. nasicus* can also be found in semi-agricultural areas. However, areas of intensive cropping may reduce habitat availability (Hammerson 1999). While specific habitat use in Montana has been little studied, it appears that preferred habitat in Montana likely includes sandy alluvial beds and river banks as well as loose soil below sandstone outcrops (Werner et al. 2004). Documented occurrences and predicted range of *H. nasicus* in Montana indicate this species preference for alluvial river systems and their tributaries (Werner et al. 2004). The annual activity period for Western Hog-nosed Snake is typically between late April/early May and October. *H. nasicus* is diurnal, being active primarily in the morning and evening, and retreating to temporary burrows dug in loose soil with its snout at night (Platt 1969). Werner et al (2004) suggests that dispersal range in Montana is 200 yards or less per day. Studies in Kansas found a movement of 408 meters in 17 days for a male during the breeding season (Platt 1969).

Emergence from hibernation typically occurs in April/May with males often wandering widely to seek out sedentary females by following scent trails (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Mating generally occurs in May. However, some mating may occur late in the year and females have been found to store sperm over winter from fall matings (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Courtship behavior has not been described. Eggs are laid in shallow (to 10 cm) nests excavated in loose or sandy soil in July, with clutches containing 2 to as many as 24 eggs (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Hatching occurs from mid-August to mid-September with an estimated full incubation period of 30-60 days. *H. nasicus* does not hibernate communally and by October individuals dig burrows below the frostline in sandy or course soil and enter hibernation until the following spring (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Males reach sexual maturity between 2-3 years while females reach maturity between 3-4 years (Hammerson 1999). Platt (1969) concluded that juveniles constitute the bulk of the population and that only about 30 percent of a Kansas population was four years or older. Maximum life expectancy in the wild appears to be approximately 8 years (Platt 1969). Population data for this species appear to be meager. However, in a study in Kansas, Platt (1969) found in two populations as 57 and 121 snakes, with densities of 2.8 and 6.0/ha, respectively. *H. nasicus* primarily uses

sight and scent to detect prey (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Buried prey is excavated with the upturned snout, while above ground prey are seized with wide open mouth. Like other *Heterodon* species, *H. nasicus* consumes a relatively large percentage of amphibians. However, *H. nasicus* relies less on amphibians than other species in this genus. Amphibian prey includes those in the genera *Bufo*, *Spea*, and *Scaphiopus*. *Heterodon* spp. are adapted to eating toads using their large mouths, mobile maxillae, and elongated posterior maxillary teeth that hold and deflate inflated toads (Kroll 1976). Other food items include bird eggs, small mammals, and invertebrates (Ernst and Ernst 2003). *H. nasicus* also contain slightly toxic saliva secretions, which have caused mild envenomations in some humans (McAlister 1963, Kapus 1964, Grogan 1974, Morris 1985). Predators include hawks, crows, and coyotes. Hog-nosed snakes are well known for their “death feigning” defensive behavior where they vomit, exudes feces, rolls over on its back, and extends its tongue from its mouth (Gehlbach 1970, Kroll 1977) Individual defensive behaviors vary among individuals. Prior to death-feigning, they will often inflate their body, spread their necks, hiss, and pretend to strike. However, they almost never bite (Degenhardt et al. 1996).

Status and Conservation

Western Hog-nosed Snakes appear to be sparsely distributed in the Great Plains region of eastern and north central Montana. In addition, documented occurrences of the species in the state have declined in recent years, and the status of *H. nasicus* in Montana is uncertain (Werner et. al 2004). *H. nasicus* is currently listed as a species of special concern in Montana. However, it is unclear if this is simply due to a lack of intensive surveys and secretive nature of the species, 2) limited and/or patchy distribution of suitable habitat and appropriate soils, or 3) an actual decline in this species abundance in Montana. The fact that this species does not typically reach sexual maturity until their third or fourth year may potentially contribute to naturally low population numbers. Risk factors relevant to the viability of populations of this species are likely to include conversion to intensive agriculture, amphibian prey declines, habitat loss/fragmentation, road and trail development, overgrazing, and use of pesticides and herbicides. However, perhaps the greatest risk to maintaining viable populations in Montana is the lack of baseline data on its distribution, status, and habitat use. These data are needed to monitor trends and recognize dramatic declines when and where they occur within Montana. Over its range, *H. nasicus* has apparently decreased in numbers and is now protected in several states (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Studies identifying or addressing specific risk factors for *H. nasicus* are lacking. However, documented studies and other issues pertaining to their conservation include the following: (1) Roads often have negative impacts on population size and distribution of snakes and other reptiles. High road density has been positively correlated to low population size, and restriction to roadless areas, which can lead to local extirpations (Rudolph et al. 1998, Jochimsen et al. 2004). While this has not been studied directly on *H. nasicus* in Montana, populations are probably affected in areas of high road density. A high percentage of observation records in Montana and Alberta are road-killed individuals (MTNHP 2007). Similarly, a large numbers of road-killed specimens have been observed in Alberta. Their tendency to bask on roads in morning hours makes them particularly vulnerable. However, their small home ranges and nonmigratory habits make this less of a risk for populations in roadless areas (Wright and Didiuk 1998). (2) Little data exists on the effects of agricultural activities on *H. nasicus*. However, agricultural activities generally have significant negative impacts on snake habitat (Russell and Bauer 2000). Much of Montana’s native prairie is now under cultivation, with 5,589,905 hectares classified as agricultural lands in 1997 (Redmond et al. 1998). Furthermore, a fairly recent increasing trend in cropland conversion is evident with 1.2

million acres of native prairie were converted to cropland between 1982-1997, much of which is located in within the natural range of *H. nasicus*. Wright and Didiuk (1998) suggest that in Alberta agricultural activities constitute the greatest risk factor to *H. nasicus* populations by destroying habitat which creates barriers to dispersal, by direct killing during plowing and harvesting activities, and by ingestion of pesticides and herbicides. (3) (Wright and Didiuk 1998) suggest that oil and gas development in Alberta may pose a threat via road-building, high traffic, and creation of long trenches which are known to trap other snake species. Coal Bed Methane Development may also pose similar threats via increased road development and traffic associated with development (Jochimsen et al. 2004). (4) There is evidence that the Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*) and the Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*) have experienced declines in western Montana, primarily from infections of chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) (Maxell 2000). If significant amphibian declines occur in eastern Montana from the similar pathogens or other causes, it could pose an indirect threat (Wootton 1994) to *H. nasicus* populations by limiting a primary food source. (5) Western Hog-nosed snakes are often mistaken for rattlesnakes and intentionally killed due to their intimidating appearance and defensive behavior. Ranchers and farmers erroneously call this species the “puff adder” in many parts of their range and consider them dangerous. (Dgenhardt et al 1996, Wright and Didiuk 1998).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Documented occurrences of *H. nasicus* in Montana are relatively few between 1990 and 2000 (Maxell et al. 2003). It is unclear if this is due to a decline in abundance in the state, or lack of intensive surveys and secretive nature of the species.
2. More intensive surveys for this species in suitable habitat throughout its predicted range are recommended. Concurrent monitoring of *H. nasicus* and local prey populations, such as *Bufo woodhousii*, *Pseudacris maculata*, and *Rana pipiens* may be useful for evaluating the effects of potential future amphibian declines.
3. Practical methods for evaluating the impact of conversion of habitat to agricultural activities should be explored. Questions to be addressed include determining the percentage of the landscape that needs to remain in native vegetation for populations to remain viable.
4. Systematic baseline surveys and long-term monitoring should be conducted in known populations that occur within Montana’s cold bed methane development areas to assess potential impacts from road development and habitat fragmentation as well as possible indirect effects to prey populations.
5. Studies of habitat use and population dynamics are needed, especially as they relate to livestock grazing, logging, sagebrush and juniper encroachment, and agricultural practices, to identify species responses to these habitat perturbations and develop effective measures for mitigation of negative impacts.
6. The role of insecticides and herbicides in pest control programs of areas occupied by Western Hog-nosed Snake needs to be determined, as use of these chemicals could severely impact snake populations by eliminating a significant portion of their prey, directly or indirectly. Monitoring of *H. nasicus* populations in areas already impacted by exotic weeds is also very desirable.
7. To avoid direct persecution by humans, the correct identification and harmless nature of this species should be emphasized by biologists and land managers while disseminating information to the general public through public outreach activities.

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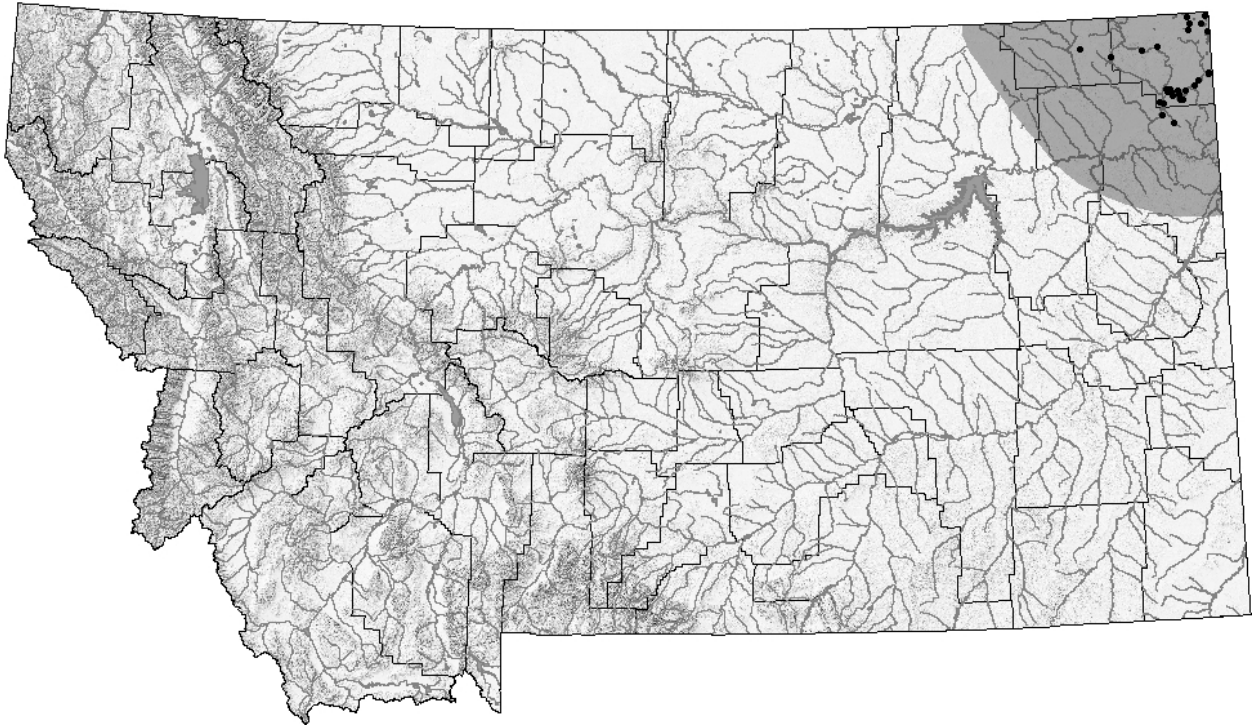
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Smooth Greensnake (*Opheodrys vernalis*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The Smooth Greensnake has a mostly continuous range throughout the northeastern United States from Nova Scotia south to northern Virginia and northwesterly to the upper Midwest, where its range becomes widely scattered further west and south. Isolated populations exist as far west as Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico, and as far south as Texas and part of Mexico (Ernst and Ernst 2003, Stebbins 2003). In Montana, Smooth Greensnakes have been observed from only three northeastern counties: Sheridan, Daniels, and Roosevelt Counties (Black and Bragg 1968, Hendricks 1999, Maxell 2003). These observations are located on the periphery of their range, crossing the Saskatchewan and North Dakota borders into Montana's Glaciated Dark Brown Prairie and Coteau Lakes Upland Ecoregions (Woods et al. 2003). Three subspecies have been proposed (including *O. v. blanchardi* in Montana) based primarily on clinal variation in numbers of ventral and caudal scales (Grobman 1941, Smith 1963, Grobman 1992a, Grobman 1992b). However, these subspecies are currently unrecognized by most herpetologists due to overlap in morphology and a lack of molecular evidence (Collins 1992). Additionally, some herpetologists have designated a new genus, *Liochlorophis*, for the Smooth Greensnake based on morphological and physiological differences between it and the Rough Greensnake (*O. aestivus*) (Oldham and Smith 1991, Hammerson 1999).

Maximum Elevation

847 m (2,780 ft) in Daniels County (Werner et al. 2004).

Identification

The Smooth Greensnake is a small, thin, unpatterned, bright green snake with smooth (unkeeled) dorsal scales and a uniform white to cream ventral surface, sometimes becoming yellowish

toward the tail. The anal plate is divided, and there is a single anterior temporal scale. There are usually 8 (occasionally seven) lower labials and usually seven (occasionally six) yellowish upper labials. Each nostril is centered within a single scale. There are 15 midbody dorsal scale rows, 106-154 ventrals, and 59-102 subcaudals. Individuals rarely exceed 50 cm (20 inches) total body length (TBL), but females are generally larger and have been known to reach 80 cm (32 inches) TBL. Females can become sexually mature as short as 28 cm TBL, while males may mature at 30 cm TBL. Dead or preserved specimens turn bluish (St. John 2002). Recently hatched neonates may have gray, olive, or brown backs and range from 8.3-16.7 cm (mean 13.3) TBL (Wright and Wright 1957, Smith 1963, Powell et al. 1998, Ernst and Ernst 2003, Werner et al. 2004). Eggs are approximately 25 cm (1 inch), and are white and oval with thin shells and blunt ends (Werner et al. 2004).

Similar Species:

Eastern Racers (*Coluber constrictor*) also have unkeeled scales and are a generally a uniform green in Montana, but they are always much larger as adults. Hatchling and juvenile Eastern Racers, which may be similar in size to Smooth Greensnakes, have a distinct banded or blotched pattern before they mature. Unlike *O. vernalis*, the Eastern Racer has two anterior temporal scales, and each nostril is centered between two scales. Additionally, *C. constrictor* has an elongated preocular scale that enters the upper labial row (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003, Stebbins 2003, Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Smooth Greensnakes prefer mesic habitat such as wet prairies, meadows, marshes, open forests, and riparian corridors with lush shrubby and herbaceous cover. They are secretive, and often found under cover objects such as logs, bark, boards, and rocks (Smith 1963, Hammerson 1999, Ernst and Ernst 2003). Home range, population, and migratory data is absent in Montana and lacking elsewhere. In the Midwest, Smooth Greensnakes are thought to be locally common at some locations, but appear to be becoming rare or extirpated in others (Harding 1997). Smooth Greensnakes emerge from hibernacula in late spring to early summer. Data on post-emergence behavior and courtship is absent in Montana and poorly documented elsewhere, but mating is known to occur shortly after emergence in May (Collins 1993), but has been observed as early as April 15th in Pennsylvania (Ernst and Ernst 2003), and as late as August in southern Canada. Females inseminated in late summer or fall probably store their sperm overwinter before fertilization occurs in the spring, as with other colubrid snakes (Dymond and Fry 1932, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Data collected by Smith, et al. (1991) in Colorado suggest that females do not reproduce every year and that sexual maturity is not reached until the third calendar year (Hammerson 1999). Females are oviparous, laying one or two clutches of eggs under stones, boards, logs, and inside rotting wood (Smith 1963). Northern populations typically oviposit from late July through August, although no data exists for Montana. Eggs are typically incubated for 3-4 weeks before hatching, but Michigan females have oviposited very late in embryogenesis, just four days prior to hatching. In Michigan and Ontario, clutch size varied from 3 to 12 eggs, averaging approximately 7 (Hammerson 1999, Ernst and Ernst 2003). Females will occasionally nest communally at high quality nest sites. Egg-groups numbering 27 and 31, each from three different females have been found in choice nest-sites in rotting logs (Cook 1964, Fowler 1966). In Manitoba, Gregory (1975) located three gravid females near, each with five eggs, in a good nest site underneath a wooden platform. Grobman (1989) found that

larger females deposit more eggs than smaller females, and that in eastern populations clutch size decreases with an increase in latitude. This suggests that Montana females probably produce fewer eggs on average than populations studied at lower latitudes. Smooth Greensnakes are primarily diurnal, with most activity occurring at warmer times of the day, although they have been observed in the evening on warm asphalt (Hammerson 1999). In Illinois, Seibert and Hagen (1947) found they were most active at air temperatures between 21-30 degrees Celsius. Smooth Greensnakes are primarily ground dwellers, but have been known to climb into low shrubs to bask or forage (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003). Multiple individuals are often found together under objects, suggesting they are somewhat communal. Smooth Greensnakes primarily prey on invertebrates, particularly small insects. Documented prey includes ants, maggots, grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, grubs, spiders, centipedes, millipedes, slugs, snails, salamanders, and small crayfish (Wright and Wright 1957, Hammerson 1999, Ernst and Ernst 2003). Documented predators include gartersnakes, chickens, hawks, and cats. Their cryptic green coloration helps them avoid detection from predators. If cornered or seized, their last modes of defense are the release foul smelling cloacal secretions, and sometimes they will gape their mouths and pretend to strike, although they never bite (Cochran 1987, Hammerson 1999). Overwintering usually takes place in September at northern latitudes. They have been observed conducting prehibernation movements as early as late August between 5,000 and 6,000 feet in the Black Hills, South Dakota (Smith 1963). Overwintering occurs underground, and has been observed in ant mounds, mammal burrows, gravel banks, and spaces between granite slabs. *O. vernalis* may hibernate communally with other species, including *Thamnophis radix* and *Thamnophis sirtalis*. (Criddle 1937, Lachner 1942, Degenhardt et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Status and Conservation

In Montana, Smooth Greensnakes have a very restricted range, occupying a portion of just the three northeastern counties. There have only been 43 recorded observations, but 35 of those have come in the last 10 years. This lack of records may reflect a low abundance at the periphery of their range, or simply a lack of reported sightings and formal surveys in the region, which is sparsely populated and dominated by private lands. (1) Smooth Greensnakes consume large numbers of insects and is therefore probably most successful where they are plentiful. In Montana, they found in a very small region primarily used for grazing and crop production. Therefore, heavy use of insecticides is a concern since it may affect this species both by direct poisoning and indirectly through prey reduction. In Indiana, Minton (1972) reported that two Smooth Greensnakes died from direct poisoning after insecticide application (Ernst and Ernst 1972). (2) Over-grazing, especially along riparian corridors, can trample and alter vegetation and soil structure, which are important components of *O. vernalis* habitat, and therefore could affect local populations. Grazing is known to reduce the abundance of many invertebrates (Hutchingson and King 1980), which could directly affect prey availability for *O. vernalis*. (3) Although effects of road mortality have not been directly studied in *O. vernalis*, studies on other snakes indicate roads often have negative impacts on population size and distribution. High road density has been positively correlated to low population size, which leads to populations being restricted to pockets with low road density. This may lead to isolation or restricted interaction between populations (Rudolph et al. 1998, Jochimsen et al. 2004). This is of particular concern in Montana, where Smooth Greensnakes appear to be rare, and are found within a very restricted area.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Need to identify the southern and western extents of the species distribution in Montana.
2. Abundance, and local habitat use need to be more accurately assessed either by conducting systematic surveys in suitable habitat, or by encouraging local landowners and resource managers to report observations.
3. If located, overwintering hibernacula should be protected to avoid mass mortalities, especially if hibernacula potentially support large numbers of snakes.
4. Conduct outreach programs in the area to educate locals on the rarity, sensitivity, and potential benefits (e.g. insect predation) of this species. This could be beneficial in helping to avoid intentional killings and raise interest in protecting high-quality habitat.
5. Conduct research on Smooth Greensnake ecology and natural history to fill the void of information in Montana for this species.
6. If herbicides must be used near known *O. vernalis* populations, glyphosate (Roundup) should be avoided and 2,4-D should be used as an alternative. Relyea (2005) found Roundup completely eliminated 2 species of tadpoles and nearly exterminated a third, while 2,4-D had no direct observable effect on tadpoles.

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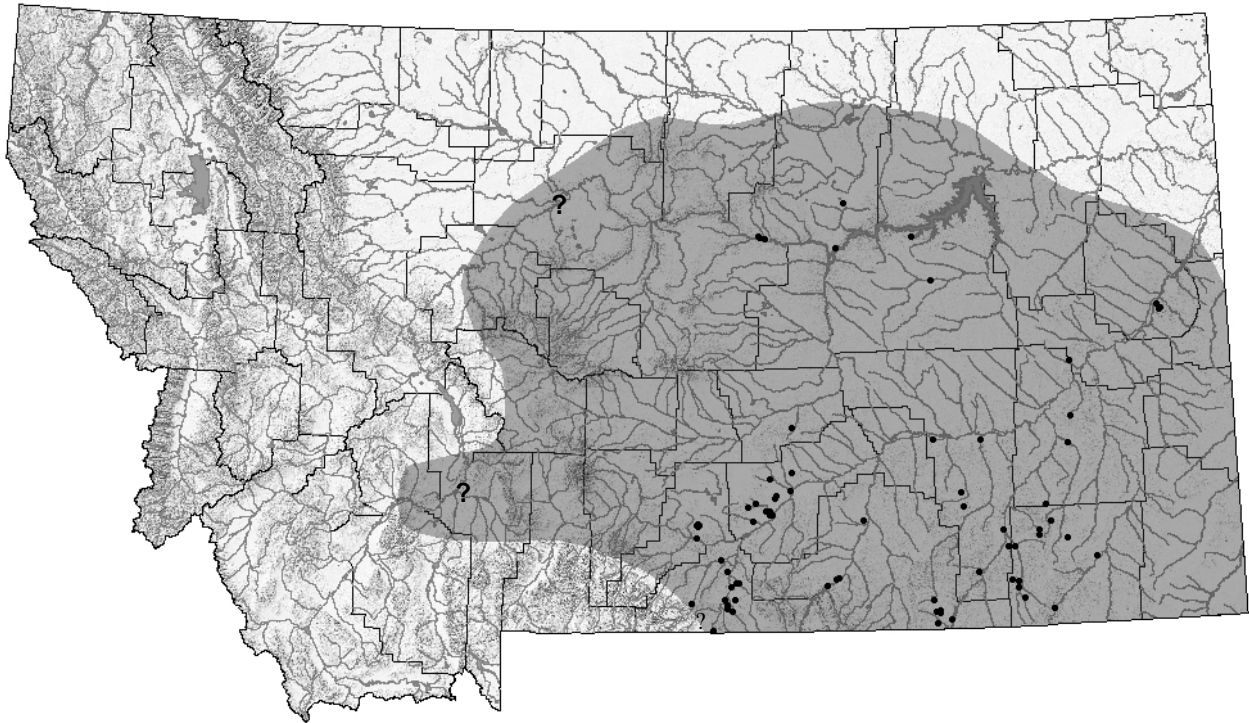
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Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Milksnakes are distributed widely throughout the eastern and central United States west to the Rocky Mountains. Eastern Montana marks the northern limit for this species in the west and there are also pockets of milksnakes in Utah, eastern Wyoming, eastern Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico (Stebbins 2003, Werner et al. 2004). There are 25 subspecies of milksnake in North America with the pale milksnake (*L. t. multistriata*) being the only subspecies found in Montana. Pale milksnakes are also found in parts of Wyoming, South Dakota, and Nebraska. Milksnakes have been documented in 10 counties in eastern Montana and there are unconfirmed records in 4 additional counties in central Montana.

Maximum Elevation Record

1257 m (4,124 ft) in Carbon County (Laurie Vitt, pers. com., MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Eggs:

Oval, white, slightly granular, and sticky. Length 36 mm (1.4 in.) and width 14 mm (0.56 in.). Individual weight for each egg is approximately 2-4 g. Clutch size ranges from 4-13 and is positively correlated with female body size (Fitch and Fleet 1970, Groves and Sachs 1973, Degenhardt et al. 1996, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004).

Young:

Similar coloration pattern to adults but total length is just 16-29 cm (6.2-11.3 in.) (Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004).

Adults:

Milksnakes possess alternating orange, black, and white rings along the length of their body. For milksnakes in Montana, repeating pattern may not meet underneath and be true rings, but rather are saddles of alternating color. Dorsal scales smooth. White/yellow coloration and repeating black marking at saddle edges ventrally. Neck is short and thick leading to a rounded snout often mottled with black. Pupils are round and there are 7-8 upper labial (lip) and 8-10 lower labial scales. Total length for adults ranges 41-71 cm (16-28 in.) with males attaining sizes slightly longer than females (Hammerson 1999, St John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Similar species:

The pale milksnakes' brightly banded coloration easily distinguishes it from other snake species in Montana.

Habitat use/Natural History

Milksnakes inhabit grasslands of eastern Montana. Largely nocturnal they will spend the daylight hours under cover in burrows near rock outcroppings, juniper hillsides, riparian zones, or perhaps under construction debris and near buildings such as barns (Dyrkacz 1977, Williams 1988, Degenhardt et al. 1996, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Milksnakes appear highly adaptable in their microhabitat selection. For example, Henderson et al. (1980) routinely found *L. t. triangulum* during the day under a piece of steel that overlaid an abandoned rodent burrow along a roadside in Wisconsin. In addition to locating milksnakes under pieces of metal, logs, and stumps, Fitch and Fleet (1970) described flat rocks as a favorite shelter for milksnakes during the day because of the ambient heat gained from the sun-warmed object. Henderson et al. (1980) found similar movements to sun-warmed objects during the day for milksnakes in Wisconsin. Dyrkacz (1977) studied two populations of *L.t. triangulum* in Illinois that occupied abandoned quarries that were used extensively by humans as dumps. These snakes were regularly found under man-made debris such as car hoods, plywood, and carpet. Barten (1981) even described finding a pregnant female under a lawnmower in North Carolina. Although mostly active at night when temperatures range 18°-26° C (64°-79° F), milksnakes may be observed in daylight particularly when the ground is wet (Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Milksnakes will emerge from hibernation in April or May and breed shortly after. Males can be quite aggressive during mating often biting the neck of the female during copulation (Fitch and Fleet 1970, Hammerson 1999). Adults are sexually mature at 3-4 years (Fitch and Fleet 1970). Females will lay 4-13 eggs, sometimes communally, during late June or early July under cover or in burrows. (Fitch and Fleet 1970, Dyrkacz 1977, Henderson et al. 1980, Werner et al. 2004). Newborns will emerge in late summer and likely will not feed prior to hibernation (Fitch and Fleet 1970, Groves and Sachs 1973, Tryon and Murphy 1982). Movement data for milksnakes are limited, however, adults in Kansas moved 76-396 m (250-1,300 ft) in a season and were estimated to have home ranges 20 ha (50 ac) in size (Fitch and Fleet 1970). Milksnakes return to hibernacula in October and may overwinter with other species of snakes (Hammerson 1999). Descriptions of den sites are limited but Henderson et al. (1980) discovered milksnakes denning in an embankment of a railroad track and Hammerson (1999) noted discovery of milksnakes emerging from a den in a rock crevice in Colorado. Abandoned rodent burrows are likely used for overwintering as well (Degenhardt et al. 1996). Milksnakes are opportunistic predators that forage widely in their search for prey. Milksnakes will constrict larger prey or eat smaller prey without constriction (Werner et al. 2004). Fitch and Fleet (1970) found that milksnakes in

Kansas largely consumed skinks (*Eumeces spp.*), but they also ate small mammals such as deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*). Mendoza and Ruiz-Pina (1995) found evidence of milksnake predation on shrews (*Sorex sp.*). Hammerson (1999) noted that several studies have recorded milksnake consumption of bird and reptile eggs and Werner et al. (2004) report that earthworms and even insects can make up a portion of the milksnakes' diet. Small mammals are major food items in the diet of the larger subspecies *L. t. triangulum* (Williams 1988). Werner et al. (2004) cite raptors, coyotes (*Canis latrans*), and badgers (*Taxidea taxus*) as likely predators of milksnakes. In addition, Gurrola-Hidalgo and Chavez (1996) observed a gray hawk (*Buteo nitidus*) capture and eat a *L. t. nelsoni*. Milksnakes are non-venomous, but will coil their bodies, vibrate their tails, and even strike when threatened (Werner et al. 2004). However, some subspecies of *L. triangulum* will use their tails as decoys to avoid predation. For example, Smith (2001) observed a threatened individual weave through vegetation in a manner that made the tail of the animal appear as the head region. Most large individuals in the wild are 6-10 years old while milksnakes in captivity may live to 20 years (Fitch and Fleet 1970, Hammerson 1999).

Status and Conservation

The milksnake is considered a Species of Concern by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Milksnakes have been documented only on the east side on the Continental Divide in Montana and the distribution of milksnakes in the state is based on a small number of specimens (Maxell et al. 2003). There is no information on the status of milksnake populations in Montana. Because of its nocturnal habits and relatively low human density in its region of occurrence, the milksnake may be more common than records indicate (Werner et al. 2004). Little is known about overwintering sites of milksnakes. However, because of the concentration of possibly large numbers of individuals and their inability to move about at cold temperatures, disturbance to hibernacula can negatively impact milksnakes. Furthermore, milksnakes are thought to hibernate with other snake species (Werner et al. 2004) making hibernacula important for overall snake conservation. Snake mortality on roadways, at times in great numbers, has been documented widely with some drivers even purposely swerving to kill snakes (Langley et al. 1989, Krivda 1993, Rosen and Lowe 1994, Hammerson 1999). Drykacz (1977) recorded instances of milksnakes being killed on roadways in Illinois and Mendoza and Ruiz Pina (1995) found a road-killed individual in Mexico. Milksnakes have been found on roadways at night (Hammerson 1999) and may be attracted to these areas because of their retained heat from the afternoon's sun (Henderson et al. 1980). In general, snakes near human population centers or areas with high levels of recreational use can experience mortality from humans, predation from pets or even predation from small carnivores that can exist at higher densities near human concentrations (Maxell and Hokit 1999). A general lack of knowledge about snakes coupled with deeply anchored fears sometimes leads humans to destroy snakes on sight, regardless of the species (Dodd 1993, Maxell and Hokit 1999). Hammerson (1999) documented snake mortality, at times quite brutal, at campgrounds and human recreation sites in Colorado. In addition, popular large-scale rattlesnake roundups are known to kill not only thousands of the targeted species, but also many other incidental species as well (Weir 1992, Arena et al. 1995). Chemical contamination may adversely affect snakes (Werner et al. 2004), however changes in agricultural practices and federal laws can sometimes mitigate these impacts. For example, DDT levels in snakes have declined since the banning of the pesticide (Fleet and Plapp 1978). Snakes may harbor pollutants indicative of overall environmental health (Bauerle et al. 1975, Stafford et al. 1976, Anderson 1977), thereby adding to the value of their

conservation and persistence. Arguments for snake conservation have also been made on the basis of controlling rodent populations and hence, diseases, such as plague and hantavirus (Degenhardt et al. 1996).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. If location is known, protect hibernation sites from disturbance or destruction.
2. Outreach programs that provide the public with scientifically accurate and lucid information about snakes should be encouraged and supported whenever possible.
3. Determining the distribution of milksnakes throughout the state would be beneficial. This could be done through active inventory efforts and increased reporting of sightings from resource managers and the public.
4. The lack of research on milksnakes in the wild is startling. Research that explores any aspect of wild milksnake ecology would enhance our understanding of this species. Studies that explore overwintering behavior and sites, foraging behavior, dispersal, survival, and breeding habits would be most beneficial initially.

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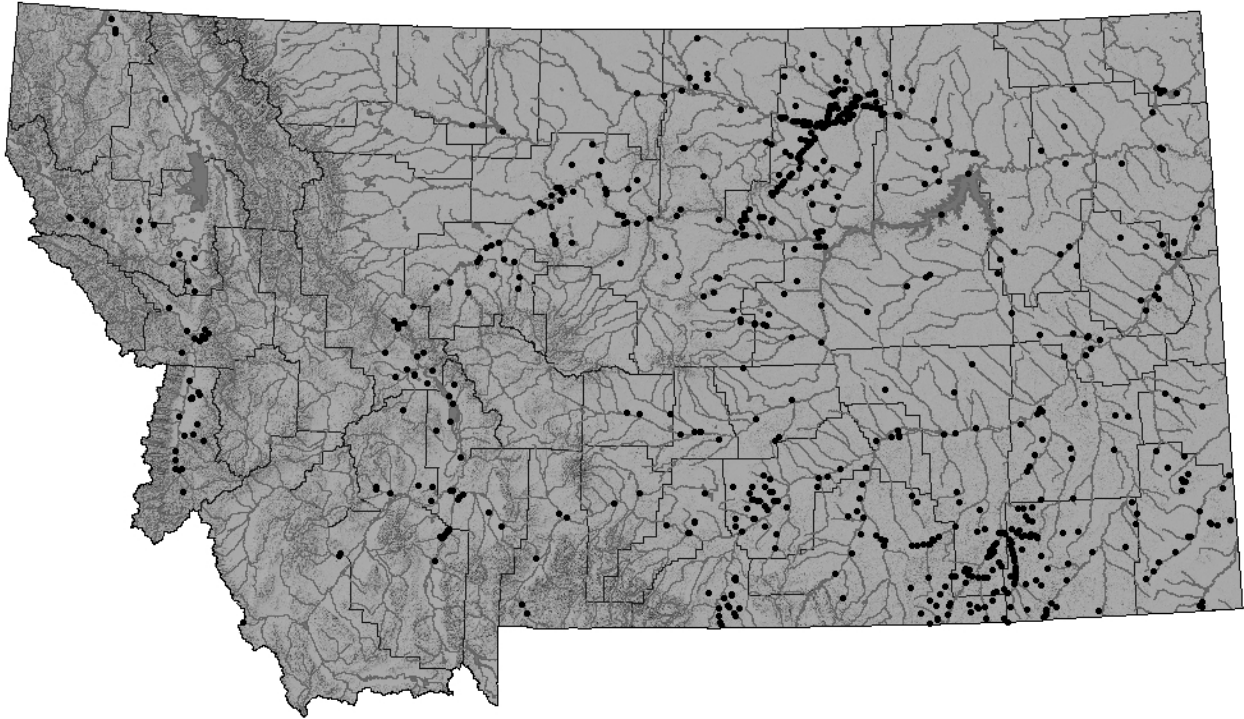
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Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Gophersnakes, or bullsnakes, range from southern Alberta and Saskatchewan into Montana, across the central U.S. into the desert Southwest and California. They also inhabit most of Oregon and the eastern half of Washington (Werner et al. 2004). There is much debate about subspecies designations within *P. catenifer* and *P. melanoleucus*, in fact, some scientists consider the Montana gophersnake a subspecies of *P. melanoleucus* (Hammerson 1999, Rodriguez-Robles and De Jesus-Escobar 2000, Werner et al. 2004). In addition, several subspecies of *P. melanoleucus* are distributed throughout the U.S. with pockets reaching as far as New Jersey and Florida (Conant and Collins 1998). We consider *P. catenifer* the species found in Montana and it has been documented in 42 counties.

Maximum Elevation

2,225 m (7,300 ft) in Beaverhead County (Barbara Garcia, pers. com., MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Eggs:

Oval and white with a leathery shell. Eggs are sticky, will adhere to one another, and are typically 2.5 cm (1 in.) wide and 5-7 cm (2-2.75 in.) long and weigh approximately 25 g (Imler 1945, Gutzke et al. 1985, Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Clutch size is variable ranging between 2-24 eggs (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Werner et al. 2004) and is positively correlated with female body size (Imler 1945, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Diller and Wallace 1996).

Young:

Newborns resemble adults although key characteristics are not as easily discernible (Werner et al.

2004). Weight for hatchlings ranges from 12-22 g and total length is 36-51 cm (14-20 in.) (Imler 1945, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Diller and Wallace 1996, Werner et al. 2004).

Adults:

Adults are tan/brown, with black, dark brown, or brick red blotches dorsally extending to tail tip. Black blotches also occur on either side and down center of yellow/cream underside. Blotches along side of tail may join giving ringed appearance. Head is slightly wider than body with a small elevated ridge between the eyes and prominent, wedge-shaped scale at the snout tip. Often a vertical black band runs from the eye to the lip and there are black bars where labial (lip) scales meet. Montana's largest snake, adults range 91-152 cm (3-5 ft) with individuals capable of reaching lengths > 243 cm (8 ft) (Nussbaum et al 1983, Degenhardt et al. 1996, Werner et al. 2004). There is no difference in size between sexes (Diller and Wallace 1996).

Similar species:

Prairie Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus viridis*) have vertical pupils and juvenile racers (*Coluber constrictor*) are much smaller and have smooth scales dorsally. Gophersnakes may vibrate their tails when provoked, however, there is no morphological rattle present as in the rattlesnake.

Habitat use/Natural History

Gophersnakes occupy open habitats such as prairie, sagebrush, and drier valley bottoms in Montana. Within fairly open habitats they are generalists and can also be found near buildings, rock piles, and talus (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Diller and Johnson 1988, Diller and Wallace 1996, Werner et al. 2004). Although they have been observed swimming and climbing trees, gophersnakes are largely terrestrial and frequent rodent burrows. An efficient burrower itself, the gophersnake will use its snout to dig and its head to scoop during excavation (Burger and Zappalorti 1986, Hammerson 1999). On hot summer days, >35° C (95° F), gophersnakes can die in a relatively short time if exposed to direct sun and they will move to shade under vegetation or into burrows (Imler 1945, Werner et al. 2004). Because of the gophersnakes' preferred body temperature, 30° C (86° F), its activities are usually restricted to mornings and late evenings, but occasionally they will be active on warm nights or relatively cool days (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Diller and Wallace 1996, Hammerson 1999). Gophersnakes will breed soon after emergence from hibernation in April or May. Males will breed in their second or third year, whereas females typically will not breed until at least their third year (Diller and Wallace 1996, Hammerson 1999). In a study of gophersnakes in southwestern Idaho, Diller and Wallace (1996) found that 97% of females bred annually. Because female gophersnakes lay eggs and do not give birth to live young, they may be less dependent on fat reserves to achieve successful reproduction. This reproductive trait may also result in fecundity parameters being less sensitive to fluctuations in prey abundance (Diller and Wallace 1996). Burger and Zappalorti (1986) found that most female *P. m. melanoleucus* deposited eggs, which hatch in September/October, within 64 m (210 ft) of known hibernacula. *P. melanoleucus* hatchling behavior, and presumably predation risk, can be affected by incubation temperatures. Hatchlings incubated as eggs at medium temperatures (26°, 28° C; 79°, 82° F) performed better in lab experiments than those incubated at cool (21°, 23° C; 70°, 73° F) or hot (30°, 32° C; 86°, 90° F) temperatures (Burger 1989b). After breeding, gophersnakes will move to summer range, sometimes at distances of more than 1.6 km (1.0 mi.) (Imler 1945, Werner et al. 2004). Burger and Zappalorti (1986) noted that male *P. m. melanoleucus* dispersed farther than females from hibernacula in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey.

Gophersnakes return to hibernacula in October and communal overwintering is common and can even occur with other species (Brown and Parker 1976, Diller and Wallace 1996, Hammerson 1999). Hibernacula have been found in talus, rock piles, rock crevices, and rodent burrows (Brown and Parker 1976, Herrington 1988, Degenhardt et al. 1996). Gophersnakes and their associated subspecies' will not necessarily avoid human establishments (Hammerson 1999, Burger and Zappalorti 1986) and may overwinter under abandoned buildings and related debris. Although some body mass is lost during hibernation, the majority of adults (75-89%) survive the winter period while 20-29% of juveniles survive (Imler 1945, Nussbaum et al. 1983, Hammerson 1999). Gophersnakes are opportunistic predators that forage widely and frequently kill their prey through constriction (Diller and Johnson 1988, Diller and Wallace 1996). Although studies show that gophersnakes consume mainly rodents, Amstrup and McEneaney (1980) noted gophersnakes preying on long-eared owl (*Asio otus*) nestlings in Montana and Imler (1945) estimated that in some years bird eggs comprised 60% of their diet in western Nebraska. Because they are not sedentary predators, gophersnakes can have relatively large home ranges. Rodriguez-Robles (2003) found home range sizes ranged from 0.9-1.8 ha (2.2-4.4 ac) for 4 adult male gophersnakes in California. Daily movements can be as far as 155 m (508 ft), with adults capable of moving 2.4 km (1.5 mi.) in a season (Imler 1945, Werner et al. 2004). A suite of predators will consume gophersnakes, including red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Swainson's hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*), badgers (*Taxidea taxus*) and even other snakes (Hammerson 1999). Prairie dogs (*Cynomys spp.*) and ground squirrels have killed gophersnakes as well, although this was likely a result of self-defense. Gophersnakes can live for over 30 years in captivity and individuals in the wild may live for 15 years (Boundy and O'Brien 1988, Hammerson 1999).

Status and Conservation

Gophersnakes are common and occur on both sides of the Continental Divide in Montana, although most records are from the eastern portion of the state (Maxell et al. 2003). As with other species of snakes, gophersnakes can be impacted by disturbance to their hibernacula and nesting sites. Gophersnakes show substantial site fidelity for overwintering sites year after year and even small disturbances to these sites may negatively impact the snake. At body temperatures of 4° C (41° F) the gophersnake's ability to move is wholly impaired (Landreth 1972) and they may not respond to human disturbance as effectively at cooler temperatures, such as the overwintering period, than they would at warmer temperatures (Prior and Weatherhead 1994). In addition, both *P. catenifer* and *P. melanoleucus* have been shown to nest communally making these areas important for snake conservation as well (Burger and Zappalorti 1986, Hammerson 1999). However, unless the location is known through research or incidental observations, it is difficult to have a disturbance mitigation measure for nest sites because gophersnakes typically nest in rodent burrows or self-excavated burrows. Roadways and off-road vehicle (ORV) use may impact gophersnakes, particularly if they occur near hibernacula or intersect movement to such areas. Snake mortality on roadways, at times in great numbers, has been documented widely with some drivers even purposely swerving to kill snakes (Langley et al. 1989, Krivda 1993, Rosen and Lowe 1994, Hammerson 1999). In general, snakes near human population centers or areas with high levels of recreational use can experience mortality from humans, predation from pets or even predation from small carnivores that can exist at higher densities near human concentrations (Maxell and Hokit 1999). Hammerson (1999) documented gophersnake mortality, at times quite brutal, at campgrounds and human recreation sites in

Colorado. At a wildlife refuge in Nebraska, large numbers of gophersnakes were killed by wildlife managers in an effort to increase duck nest productivity (Imler 1945). Gophersnakes are sometimes mistaken for rattlesnakes, but are not venomous, however they can bite when provoked (Arnold 1929). A general lack of knowledge about snakes coupled with deeply anchored fears sometimes leads humans to destroy snakes on sight, regardless of the species (Dodd 1993, Maxell and Hokit 1999). In addition, popular large-scale rattlesnake roundups are known to kill not only thousands of the targeted species, but also many other incidental species including gophersnakes (Weir 1992, Arena et al. 1995). Near homes and construction sites plastic netting, commonly used to protect fruit trees and gardens from pests, has also been found to entangle and kill gophersnakes (Stuart et al. 2001). Although gophersnakes are beneficial to farmers through consumption of agricultural pests, mowing has been shown to kill large numbers (Hammerson 1999). While individual gophersnakes near population centers may experience direct mortality from humans, populations can persist in substantially altered, semi-agricultural landscapes and their associated towns (Hammerson 1999). Farmers may consider gophersnakes beneficial because they consume prey that farmers consider pests, such as deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) and ground squirrels (*Spermophilus spp.*) (Diller and Johnson 1988). Arguments for gophersnake conservation have even been made on the basis of controlling rodent populations and hence, diseases, such as plague and hantavirus (Degenhardt et al. 1996). Chemical contamination may adversely affect snakes (Werner et al. 2004), however changes in agricultural practices and federal laws can sometimes mitigate these impacts. For example, DDT levels in snakes have declined since the banning of the pesticide (Fleet and Plapp 1978). Ohlendorf et al. (1998) found that a population of gophersnakes in California harbored higher than average levels of selenium and postulated that predators of gophersnakes may be negatively affected through consumption of contaminated snakes. Snakes may harbor pollutants indicative of overall environmental health (Bauerle et al. 1975, Stafford et al. 1976, Anderson 1977), thereby adding to the value of their conservation and persistence.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. If location is known, protect hibernation and nesting sites from disturbance or destruction.
2. Whenever possible, avoid disturbance to talus, rock piles, and outcroppings.
3. Outreach programs, especially those reaching farmers, that provide the public with scientifically accurate and lucid information about gophersnakes should be encouraged and supported whenever possible. Emphasizing gophersnakes' rodent and disease control possibilities is encouraged.
4. Roadways kill large numbers of gophersnakes in some regions. Research that addresses these impacts at a population level and can examine the efficacy of culvert use/mitigations for movement would be beneficial.

Bibliography *indicates an article with information specific to Montana

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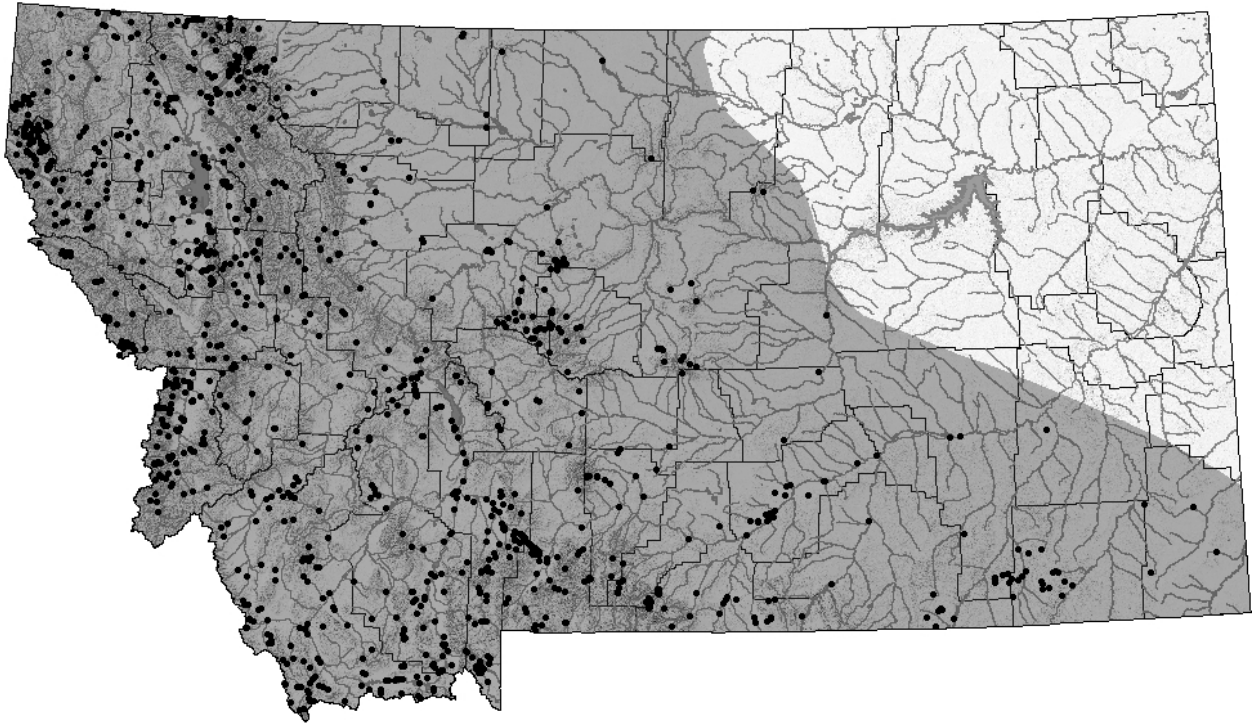
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Terrestrial Gartersnake (*Thamnophis elegans*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

There is some debate as to the number of subspecies in the Terrestrial Gartersnake complex and more genetic studies are needed (Fox 1951, Bronikowski and Arnold 2001). However, most experts currently recognize five subspecies of *Thamnophis elegans* in western North America, north of Mexico (Fitch 1983, Rossman 1996). The only subspecies found in Montana, the Intermountain Wandering Gartersnake (*Thamnophis elegans vagrans*), has the most extensive distribution on the continent, ranging from southern British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan southward to New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada (Rossman et al. 1996, Stebbins 2003). Genetic studies by Arnold and Bronikowski (2001) suggest that deep genetic lineages occur within *T. elegans vagrans*. Likewise, strong behavioral variations between populations have been noted, but these differences are not apparent from phenotypic characteristics (Arnold 1977, Ayers and Arnold 1983). In Montana *T. elegans* is absent only from the northeastern Great Plains where mountainous terrain is absent. One of the most common and adaptable reptiles in Montana, it occupies a variety of habitats from river bottoms to sites above treeline.

Maximum Elevation

2,765 m (9,071 ft) in Carbon County (Werner et al. 2004). However, the species has been recorded at 3,182 m (10,440 ft) in the headwaters of a drainage flowing into Montana between the east and west summits of Beartooth Pass and immediately south of the state line in Park County, Wyoming (Hendricks 1996).

Identification

Adults have a dusky base body color of gray, grayish brown, and infrequently black. Similar to other Montana gartersnakes, there are three strips extending the length of the body: two pale side-stripes are found on the second and third scale rows and a single yellow, orange, or white stripe is located down the middle of the back. Two rows of staggered dark spots are located on each side between the side stripes and dorsal stripe. Unique to this species, the upper row of dark spots overlaps the dorsal stripe slightly. Dark blotches are also located on each side of the neck at the dorsal base of the skull. The belly is pale or bluish with uniform dark flecking along the center of the ventral scales. The dorsal scales are keeled with 19 or 21 rows at midbody. As with all gartersnakes, their anal plate is undivided. The Terrestrial Gartersnake has usually 8 upper labial scales and 10 lower labial scales. The crease between each upper labial scale is black. As with other gartersnakes, females usually have longer snout-to-vent lengths (SVL) and proportionally shorter tail lengths than males (Fitch 1940, Fitch 1983, Rossman 1995, Powell et al. 1998, Stebbins 2003). Black gartersnake morphs, lacking stripes, have been found along the upper Missouri River, but have not been positively differentiated from the Common Gartersnake (Grant Hokit, pers. comm.). Newborn and juvenile Terrestrial Gartersnakes resemble adults in coloration and overall appearance, but are lighter in color and have somewhat lighter stripes. Farr (1988) reported an average size of 17.6 cm SVL for neonates in southeastern British Columbia.

Similar Species:

Gartersnakes are the only snakes in Montana with lateral striping. The Common Gartersnake usually has a darker body color with brighter stripes giving the striping much more contrast, whereas stripes on the Terrestrial Gartersnake are less striking (Koch and Peterson 1995). Terrestrial Gartersnakes usually have eight upper labial scales, while our other two species, the Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) and the Plain's Gartersnake (*Thamnophis radix*), usually have only seven. The Plain's Gartersnake has its lateral stripes located on the third and fourth scale rows, while both the Common Gartersnake and the Terrestrial Gartersnake have theirs on the second and third scale rows.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Terrestrial Gartersnakes inhabit a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic environments. Most prefer riparian woodlands or banks of water bodies such as streams, lake and pond margins, and wetlands. However, our subspecies, *T. e. vagrans*, appears to be more tolerant of drought conditions (Fitch 1949) occupying drier uplands habitats more often than other subspecies. Where the ranges of the Terrestrial Gartersnake and Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) overlap, the Terrestrial Gartersnake appears to be more of a generalist, occupying about twice as many watersheds as the Common Gartersnake. At higher elevations it prefers rocky cliffs and brush covered talus slopes, and is occasionally found along mountain lakes lacking vegetation and marshy shores (Maxell 2004). *Thamnophis elegans* usually emerge from winter hibernacula from late March to mid-May, depending on elevation and general weather conditions. They are also usually the first species to surface, exhibiting a wider tolerance for cold temperatures. In Wyoming, males emerged an average of three weeks prior to females and stayed near the hibernacula in preparation of courtship with females (Graves and Duval 1990, Rossman 1995). Unusually warm weather or unique local conditions may bring gartersnakes out of their hibernacula earlier. At Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, an active Terrestrial Gartersnake was

seen in February, presumably because of warm conditions created by nearby thermal vents (Koch and Peterson 1995). Courtship usually begins in early spring after emergence from hibernacula. However, in two populations in British Columbia, Farr (1988) reported courtship in early September. Successful fall mating is possible via an ability of females to store sperm through the winter (Stewart 1972). Sexually mature males (37-40 cm SVL) seek females (sexually mature at 42-46 cm SVL) by following pheromone trails released from glands in the cloacal region of the female. Multiple males may try to copulate with a single female at once forming "mating balls" of several intertwined individuals (Koch and Peterson 1995, Ashton 1999). Terrestrial Gartersnakes are viviparous, giving birth to live young from July through September. Three to twenty-seven neonates have been reported (Tanner 1949, Degenhardt et al. 1996, Kasper and Kasper 1997). However, average clutch size has been reported at just 7.5 in a New Mexico population. Similarly, a literature review by Ernst and Ernst (2003) report average clutch size of 8.7 among eight different litters. Clutch size is positively correlated with increased maternal SVL (Farr, 1988, Degenhardt et al. 1996). Norman (1978) has reported natural hybridization between *T. elegans* and *T. sirtalis*, although this has not been confirmed in Montana. *T. elegans* can live up to six years in nature (Werner et al. 2004), and captive specimens have lived over 20 years (Schuett et al. 1997). After mating, individuals will either remain in or near the den area or will migrate to foraging areas, dependent upon weather conditions and available foraging habitat. The longest recorded migration distance from hibernacula to a foraging area was two kilometers, taking place over a span of 7 days (Graves and Duvall 1990). After migration to foraging areas, movements within home ranges are more limited. The greatest distance traveled by a Terrestrial Gartersnake in New Mexico was only 357 meters over a span of 12 days and the greatest distance measured within one day was 67 meters (Fleharty 1967). Terrestrial Gartersnakes are generalist predators, feeding on numerous vertebrates and invertebrates. Individuals near wetlands prey on adult frogs, tadpoles, fish, mammals, small birds, leeches, and earthworms (Fitch 1940, Tanner 1949, Lystrup 1952, Thompson 2004). Geographic variation in diet exists, depending on resource availability. However, propensity to feed on amphibians is found in Montana and across their range, with foraging success positively correlated with amphibian abundance and diversity (Fitch 1940, Anderson 1977, Arnold 1977, Kephart and Arnold 1982, Jennings et al. 1992). Gartersnakes are known to congregate on shorelines during times of amphibian metamorphosis taking advantage of the physical limitations of amphibians at this life stage (Wassersug 1978). On a lakeshore in northern California, *T. elegans* was observed consuming metamorphic toads at a rate greater than one per minute (Kephart and Arnold 1982). In the Bitterroot Mountains of western Montana, Thompson (2004) found that dependence on amphibians for two species of gartersnake, *T. elegans* and *T. sirtalis*, was greater at high elevation sites, and that *T. elegans* was more dependent on larval Spotted Frogs (*Rana luteiventris*) than *T. sirtalis*, which generally consumed both larvae and adults. Despite a strong preference for amphibians in some areas, Terrestrial Gartersnakes are opportunistic feeders when their primary prey is unavailable, consuming various in many habitat types. James et al. (1982) observed 39 instances of *T. elegans* consuming White-crowned Sparrow nestlings in the northern California. Terrestrial Gartersnakes occasionally restrict or coil small mammals to immobilize them before consumption (Gregory et al. 1980). Terrestrial Gartersnakes overwinter underground in mammal burrows, fractured bedrock, rocky talus slopes, roadbeds, beneath boulders, old wells, and under building foundations. They are often the last snake to enter their hibernacula in the fall. They frequently share the underground cavity with other snakes, such as Common Gartersnakes

(*Thamnophis sirtalis*), Prairie Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus viridis*), Racers (*Coluber constrictor*), Rubber Boas (*Charinae bottae*), Milksnakes (*Lampropeltis triangulum*), and Gopher Snakes (*Pituophis catenifer*) (Brown et al. 1974, Hammerson 1986, Degenhardt et al. 1996).

Status and Conservation

In Montana, and throughout their range, Terrestrial Gartersnakes appear to be common, often with high local population densities (Rossman et al 1996, MAIP). While no density studies have been conducted in Montana, a British Columbia study estimated a density of 2.8 per hectare (Farr 1988). Although successful in many habitats unaltered streams with high-quality riparian habitat probably support the highest densities (Szaro et al. 1985). *T. elegans* is less secretive than other snakes, often concentrating around aquatic habitat, and is locally abundant in many parts of its range. These characteristics increase its capture probability relative to other snakes, making it an excellent subject for method viability studies, which can be extrapolated to other snake species of semi-aquatic habitats (Szaro et al. 1988). Despite the successful adaptability of Terrestrial Gartersnakes, some populations can be negatively affected by the following. (1) Populations may be showing declines in areas where anurans continue to disappear, such as high elevation water bodies (Jennings et al. 1992). In the Sierra Nevada, researches discovered the probability of finding *T. elegans* in lakes with amphibians was 30 times greater than lakes where they were absent. At a 1,044 lake complex, where 80% of the lakes contained non-native trout, amphibians only occupied 19% of the lakes and no gartersnakes were found at any lake. In contrast, at a 1,059-lake complex, where only 40% of the lakes contained non-native trout, amphibians were found 52% of the lakes and 62 gartersnakes were found at 33 of these lakes (Matthews et al. 2002). (2) Over-grazing, especially along riparian corridors, can trample vegetation and alter soil structure, which are both important components of *T. elegans* habitat, and may significantly affect local populations (Kauffman and Krueger 1984, Szaro et al. 1985). Szaro et al. (1985) inventoried *T. elegans* along a third-order stream in northern New Mexico along grazed portions and within two one-kilometer long cattle exclosures. He found five times as many snakes in the exclosure even though snakes were more difficult to locate than in the open grazed areas. Furthermore, grazing is known to reduce the abundance of many invertebrates (Hutchingson and King 1980), which can both directly and indirectly affect prey availability for *T. elegans*. (3) Although effects of road mortality have not been directly studied in *T. elegans*, studies on other snakes indicate roads often have negative impacts on population size and distribution. High road density has been positively correlated to low population size, which leads to populations being restricted to pockets with low road density. This may lead to isolation or restricted interaction between populations (Rudolph et al. 1998, Jochimsen et al. 2004). (4) In general, any alteration of habitat has the potential to affect gartersnake populations in unapparent ways. For example, large-scale disturbances, such as mining, may alter rock and vegetation structure, which can affect prey availability and hiding cover. Even thermoregulation, which limits essential behavioral and physiological capacities, such as digestion, oxygen consumption, tongue flicking, locomotion, and reproductive success (Stevenson et al. 1985, Arnold et al. 1995), can be affected. For example, in northeastern California, Huey et al. (1989) found that *T. elegans* had narrow structural preferences for rock retreats. They preferred rocks of mid thickness (20-40 cm), presumably because thicker rocks would not heat to their preferred range, while thin rocks would quickly heat to intolerably high temperatures. Therefore, it may be presumed that disturbances which decrease structural diversity may negatively affect *T. elegans*. (5) The Terrestrial Gartersnake's tendency to utilize a small home range, its place as

predator on the food chain, and its habit of consuming both aquatic and terrestrial prey, make it highly susceptible to bioaccumulation of heavy metals, and therefore, an excellent bioindicator of pollutants that may be entering the environment. Anderson (1977) compared the content of lead and mercury of gartersnakes from six riparian sites in Lake and Flathead counties with two sites known to have industrial pollution, Fred Bur Creek (contaminated with mercury) and an area surrounding an East Helena smelter (contaminated with lead). As suspected, concentrations of lead were approximately three times higher at East Helena and concentrations of mercury nearly twice as high at Fred Bur Creek than concentrations of those metals at the control sites in Lake and Flathead counties. Despite adequate habitat, Terrestrial Gartersnakes were rarely observed at the heavily polluted sites, qualitatively suggesting poor population viability caused by these heavy metals.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Manage for viable amphibian populations at high elevations water bodies, where *T. elegans* is more dependent on amphibians.
2. Monitor local amphibian populations and *T. elegans* populations concurrently to identify potential effects of amphibian declines.
3. Limit non-native game fish introductions, especially at high elevation lakes where *T. elegans* is most dependent on anurans.
4. Investigate the extent of impacts to *T. elegans* populations by disturbances to riparian corridors, wetlands, and other water bodies by over-grazing, timber harvest, agriculture, and mining.
5. Grazing exclosures should be constructed along stream reaches on heavily impacted streams to promote regeneration of streamside vegetation and higher organic debris.
6. Long-term affects of road building on Terrestrial Gartersnake populations should be investigated in areas of increased road development.
7. Areas with dense road development, such as regions being developed for Coal Bed Natural Gas extraction, should be particularly targeted for baseline surveys and post-development monitoring.
8. Discharge of heavy metals, pesticides, and herbicides should be avoided near areas with high concentrations of *T. elegans*. Liver and muscle tissue samples of *T. elegans* can be taken at sites with suspected exposure to pollutants to assess bioaccumulation of heavy metals in the environment (Stafford et al. 1976, Anderson 1977).
9. Land managers should avoid unnecessary disturbance of known hibernacula and foraging habitat.
10. Care should be taken that easily-overlooked high-quality microhabitats, such as pockets of forest with downed woody debris and rock outcrops near riparian areas, are preserved.

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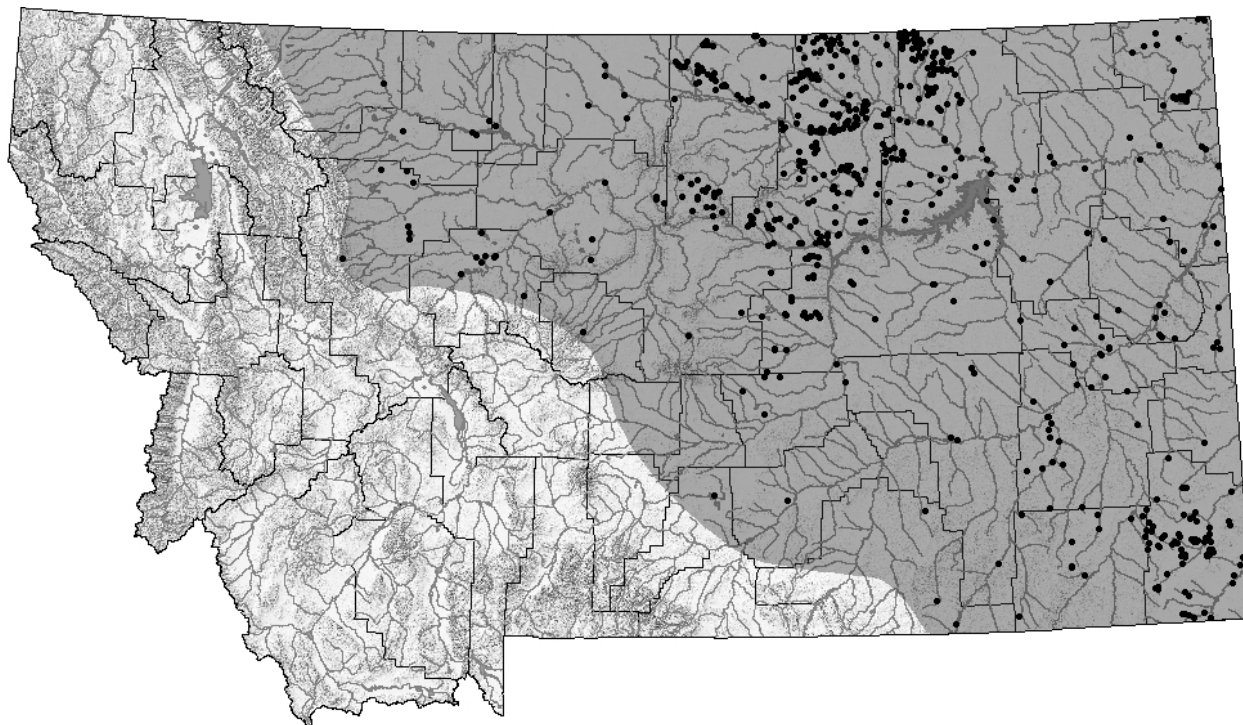
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Plains Gartersnake (*Thamnophis radix*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Appropriately named, the Plains Gartersnake (*Thamnophis radix*) is found primarily in the Great Plains, ranging from southern Alberta and Manitoba south to northeastern New Mexico and northern Oklahoma, and westerly to Illinois, Wisconsin, and northwestern Indiana. A small disjunct population is located in Ohio, and another is found in southern Indiana and Illinois. Formerly, two subspecies were recognized based on ventral and dorsal scale counts; *T. r. radix* and *T. r. haydeni* (Smith 1949). However, due to overlapping morphology, this split has been disregarded by most herpetologists and no subspecies are currently recognized (Rossman et al. 1996, Stebbins 2003). In Montana, Plains Gartersnakes range across the Great Plains region, but appear absent at higher elevations of the island mountain ranges. They range from Glacier County, east to Sheridan County, south to Carter County and Bighorn County, and northwesterly to Lewis and Clark County (Ernst 1989, Werner et al. 2004, MTNHP 2007).

Maximum Elevation

1,652 m (5,420 ft) in Lewis and Clark County (Maxell et al. 2003).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

Thamnophis radix is relatively long gartersnake with a total length (TL) typically ranging 13-34 inches (33-80 cm), but has been recorded as long as 109.2 cm TL (Rossman et al. 1996, Werner et al. 2004). Base body color is usually brownish gray to black, and the anal plate is divided. As with all of Montana's gartersnakes, three lateral stripes extend the length of the body: a distinct orange to red dorsal stripe is located down the center of its back, and two pale yellow side stripes are found on the third and fourth scale rows above the ventral scales. On lighter individuals, two

rows of alternating black spots can be seen on either side of the side stripes, and red flecks are sometimes visible between the dorsal and side strips. Plains Gartersnakes usually have seven upper labial scales (occasionally 8) and ten lower labials (occasionally 9 or 11) (Wright and Wright 1957, Rossman et al 1996, Powell et al. 1998). The creases between the upper labial scales are black. The ventral surface is pale white, yellow, or bluish-gray with black spots along each side, and occasionally in the center (Werner et al 2004). Dorsal scales are keeled, usually with 21 rows at midbody. Some individuals have light spots on their parietal scales. Females have 135 to 174 ventral scales and 54 to 74 subcaudals. Males have 138-175 ventral scales and 64 to 88 subcaudals. Adult females have wider heads and longer total lengths than males, but males have relative tail lengths averaging 2.1% to 3.3% longer than females (Rossman et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Neonates:

Plain's Gartersnakes are viviparous, giving birth to live young. Neonates closely resemble adults in pattern, but vary in size from approximately 15-25 cm (6-10 inches) TL (Werner et al 2004). Females neonates have larger heads and shorter tails than males (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Similar Species:

Gartersnakes are the only snakes in Montana with lateral stripes. On the Plains Gartersnake, the dorsal stripe is a distinct orange or red rather than yellowish, rather than yellow as in *T. sirtalis* and *T. elegans*. The Plain's Gartersnake is Montana's only gartersnake with its side stripes located on the third and fourth dorsal scale rows, rather than on the second and third rows as with Montana's other two gartersnakes. Like *T. sirtalis*, *T. radix* usually has seven upper labial scales, whereas the Terrestrial Gartersnake usually has eight (Rossman et al. 1996, Werner et al 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Plains Gartersnakes generally inhabit open areas such as grasslands, fields, meadows, poplar stands, and rock outcroppings. Usually a water source is found nearby such as sluggish streams, marshes, ponds, and reservoirs. However, they are less dependent on wetland habitat than *T. sirtalis*, straying greater distances from water as observed in Minnesota populations that occur sympatrically with *T. sirtalis* (Rossman et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003, MTHNP 2006). In Montana Plains gartersnakes emerge in April or May. Shortly after emergence, adults begin courtship and mating activities, but they have been observed mating in June and may mate in the fall prior to hibernation (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Hammerson 1999). Sexually maturity is reached between two and three years when over 36 cm total length, with males generally maturing earlier than females (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Rossman 1996). Females may not reproduce every year (Hammerson 1999). Courting begins when the female secretes a pheromone from her dorsal skin which attracts males. After shedding, the release of this pheromone is increased, enhancing their sexual attractiveness (Kubie et al. 1978). Richard Seigel has observed up to six males mating a single female, forming a small "mating ball" (Rossman et al. 1996). Males crawl to the female and press their head along her body while making rippling motions along their body and occasionally flicking their tongues along her back. Eventually a male mounts aligns his cloacal region with hers. If receptive, the female will lift her tail allowing insertion of the male's hemipenis. After insemination, a copulatory plug is inserted by the male, which temporarily deters mating by other males for at least 48 hours. This

serves as a form of intersexual competition, and may also serve to protect the female from successive copulations, which could make her vulnerable to predation (Devine 1977, Ross and Crews 1978, Rossman et al. 1996). Females give birth to live young from late July through early September. Clutch size ranges from 50-60, but is usually 10-20. However, this varies regionally and no data is available for Montana. Clutch size of six females ranged from 14-54 in Manitoba, and 5-20 in Colorado. This regional variation may be due to a number of factors, such as local environmental conditions or size and diet of the female (Gregory 1977, Rossman et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003). Similar to other Gartersnakes, males generally migrate greater distances than females throughout the year (Dalrymple and Reichenbach 1984), although neither move far during the summer. Various studies have shown dispersal rates as small as 2 meter/day to no greater than 76 meters over several months (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Daily activity patterns vary seasonally, with mid-day activity common in the spring and fall and activity restricted to the morning and evenings during mid-summer (Dalrymple and Reichenbach 1984, Rossman et al. 1996). Air temperatures between 21 and 29 degrees Celsius (70-84 degrees F) are preferred (Werner et al. 2004). In Minnesota, Ernst and Ernst (2003) have observed *T. radix* feeding on breeding chorus frogs (*Pseudacris triseriata*) after dark. Plains Gartersnakes spend an average of 1.4 hours/day on the surface, while gravid females spend about 2.8 hours/day at the surface. During the mating season, males spend an average of 4.8 hours/day compared with 2.8 hours/day for females. *T. radix* uses odor trails to locate prey by transferring airborne molecules from their tongue to their vomeronasal organ in their mouth through tongue-flicking (Kubi and Halpern 1979). Diet varies with seasonal prey availability. In Missouri, *T. radix* fed primarily on earthworms in the spring and fall, but consumed virtually none in the summer when their diet consisted of 80% juvenile and adult frogs. The switch to frogs was concurrent with their time of metamorphosis from larvae, when their abundance was highest (Seigel 1996). Similar to the diet of *T. sirtalis*, *T. radix* commonly consume amphibians, fish, earthworms, and leeches. Although no prey data is available in Montana, elsewhere *T. radix* have been recorded consuming various toads (*Bufo spp.*), spadefoots (*Spea spp.*) chorus frogs (*Pseudacris spp.*), Northern Leopard Frogs (*Rana pipiens*), Tiger salamanders (*Ambystoma tigrinum*), passerine birds, rodents, and grasshoppers (Degenhardt et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003). To avoid predation, *T. radix* show a will first run, exhibiting more a high rate of fleeing compared with other *Thamnophis* initial defense behaviors. However, when cornered or tired, they exhibit varied defense behaviors, such as striking with an open or closed mouth (usually without biting), rolling into a ball, and lifting and shaking its tail while coiled or extended (Arnold and Bennett 1984). *T. radix* also releases feces and foul-smelling secretions from their cloaca when captured to deter predators (Rossman 1999). In New Mexico, *T. radix* may have been observed avoiding danger by submerging itself in muddy water for long periods (Degenhardt et al. 1996). Similar to other gartersnakes, *T. radix* tails will break off when pulled firmly and continue wriggling to divert a predator's attention. However, tails will not grow back to their original size or shape (Rossman et al. 1996). Predation has not been documented in Montana, but elsewhere predators include the Western Hog-nosed Snakes (*Heterodon nasicus*), Eastern Racers (*Coluber constrictor*), Milksnakes (*Lampropeltis triangulum*), hawks, American crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), various predatory mammals, and Bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*) (Hammerson 1999, Ernst and Ernst 2003, Werner et al. 2004). In migratory populations of *T. radix* in Alberta, Lawson and Secoy (1991) concluded that *T. radix* used solar cues to navigate their return to communal hibernacula in the fall. Plains Gartersnakes have been found hibernating communally with Smooth Greensnakes (*Opheodrys vernalis*) in an anthill in Manitoba (Cridle 1937), and in crayfish burrows in Ohio

(Dalrymple and Reichenbach 1984). Other hibernacula include the burrows of various small mammals, rock crevices, wells, and building foundations (Ernst and Ernst 2003, Werner et al 2004). Population data is unavailable in Montana, but Plains Gartersnakes have been estimated at densities higher than any other species of *Thamnophis* in natural populations, ranging from 52-123 individuals/ha in Ohio to 320/ha in Colorado (Dalrymple and Reichenbach 1986, Rossman et al. 1996). In Ohio, mortality rates were much higher for neonates, 8-12% per month, than for adults, just 1.4-2.9% per month (Dalrymple and Reichenbach 1986). Annual mortality rate in an Illinois population was estimated at 20%. Longevity in the wild is unknown, but a captive individual reportedly survived over eight years (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Status and Conservation

Despite a lack of quantitative data, Plains Gartersnakes appear to be relatively common and secure throughout their historic range in eastern and central Montana. However, observation records in south central Montana are scarce despite suitable habitat. It is unclear if this is due to their absence from this region or a lack of reported observations. Although apparently secure in Montana small disjunct populations have become threatened in Arkansas and Ohio (Dalrymple and Reichenbach 1984, Ernst and Ernst 2003). Therefore, the following may become potential conservation concerns for some populations. (1) Roads often have negative impacts on population size and distribution of snakes and other reptiles. High road density has been positively correlated to low population size, and restriction to roadless areas, which can lead to local extirpations. (Rudolph et al. 1998, Jochimsen et al. 2004). While this has not been studied exclusively on *T. radix* in Montana, many populations are probably affected in areas of high road density. Road-killed *T. radix* are not uncommon in eastern Montana and many are found basking on roads (Matt Gates, pers. obs.). In Ohio where, *T. radix* is state-listed as endangered, Dalrymple and Reichenbach (1984) found that both road-kills and mowing operations in wildlife management areas significantly increased mortality. In Colorado, large numbers have reportedly been killed by trains (Hammerson 1999). (2) There is evidence that the Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*) and the Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*) have experienced declines in western Montana (Maxell 2000). If significant amphibian declines occur in eastern Montana, it could pose an indirect threat (Wootton 1994) to *T. radix* populations by limiting a primary food source. (3) Over-grazing, along riparian corridors, can trample vegetation and alter soil structure, and is known to reduce the abundance of many invertebrates (Hutchingson and King 1980) and amphibians (Maxell 2000), which potentially could both directly and indirectly affect prey availability for *T. radix*, especially where alternative water bodies are limited. (4) Many snakes show their highest mortality rates during active periods, such as mate-searching, migrations to and from hibernacula, or dispersals of neonates after birth. Causes of mortality during such dispersals included natural predation, domesticated animals, and road kill (Bonnet et al. 1999, Hammerson 1999).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The limits of the distribution in south central Montana should be identified. This can be done by conducting systematic surveys in suitable habitat, or by educating the public (e.g. local landowners and resource managers) to identify *T. radix* and encouraging them to report observations.
2. Monitor amphibian populations and *T. radix* populations concurrently to identify and deter any potential declines.

3. To avoid road-kills at times of heavy mortality (fall) in wildlife management areas in Ohio, Dalrymple and Reichenbach (1984) suggested rerouting traffic, installing road bumps to reduce vehicle speeds, and erecting signs to warn motorists of basking snakes. Similar steps can be taken in Montana management areas where high road mortalities are identified.
4. Due to a lack of life history and population ecology information for Plains gartersnakes within Montana, an effort should be made to conduct appropriate studies, or at least report life history observations. This data can aid in making local management decisions.

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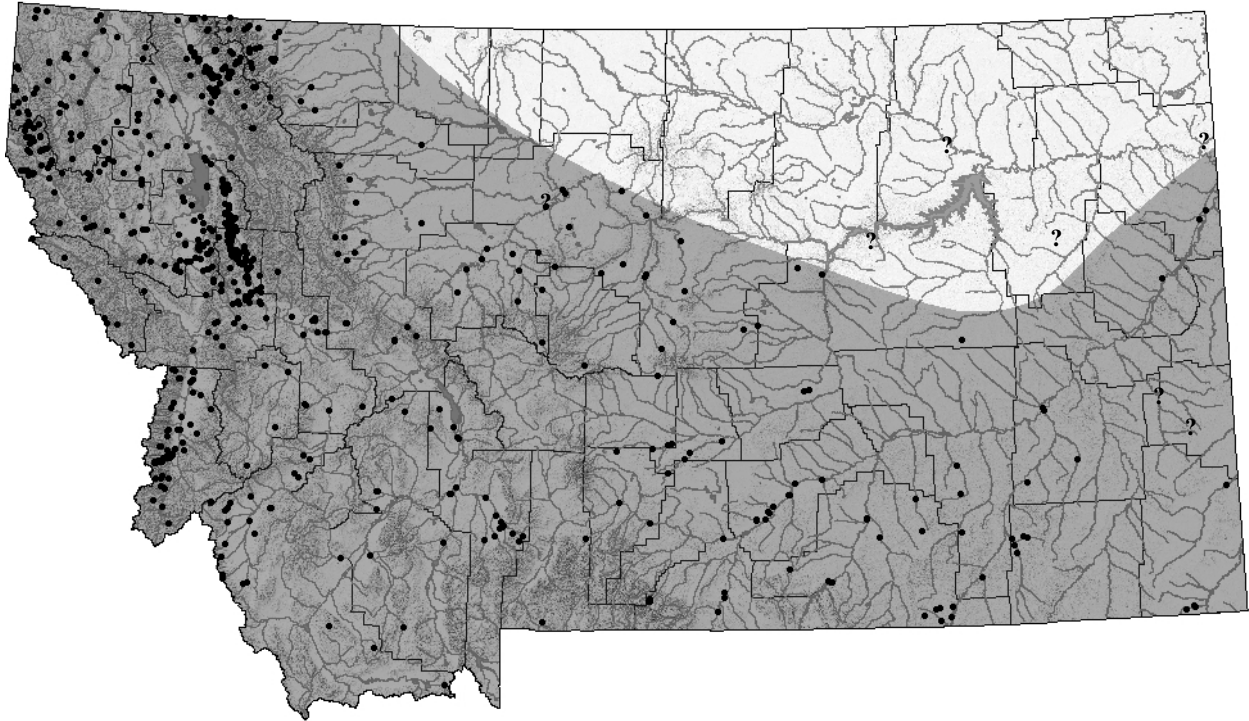
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Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

The Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) is the widest ranging reptile in North America, occurring coast to coast from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, south across Florida and west to southern California, while absent only from the American southwest. *T. sirtalis* extends much farther north than any other reptile, reaching across the southern border of the Northwest Territories. There are currently eleven recognized subspecies of Common Gartersnake on the continent, two of which reside in Montana: the Red-sided Gartersnake (*T. sirtalis parietalis*) and the Valley Gartersnake (*T. sirtalis fitchi*) (Rossman et al. 1996, Stebbins 2003). Generally, *T. s. fitchi* occurs west of the Continental Divide, while *T. s. parietalis* is found primarily east of the divide. However, these ranges are not clearly defined and there is likely some overlap and hybridization in western Montana (Fitch and Maslin 1961, Maxell 2000). Common Gartersnakes are found primarily in the mountainous to semi-mountainous regions of the Montana, including the island ranges, very few observations recorded in the eastern portion of the state. This gap in distribution may indicate a natural pattern, a regional extirpation, a lack recorded sightings, or observations being misidentified as the Plains Gartersnake (*Thamnophis radix*) (Rossman et al. 1996, Maxell 2003).

Maximum Elevation Record

2,444 m (8,020 ft) in Beaverhead County (Werner et al. 2004).

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

As with all of Montana's gartersnakes, the anal plate is undivided and three stripes extend the length of the body: two yellow side stripes located on the second and third scale rows above the ventral scales, and one yellow dorsal stripe centered down the middle of the back. Adults have a base body color that is usually brownish gray, gray, or black. Alternating red or black spots are usually present between the dorsal and side stripes. Common Gartersnakes have seven upper labial scales (infrequently 8 and rarely 6) and ten lower labials (occasionally 9 or 11) (Wright and Wright 1957, Anderson 1977, Powell et al. 1998, Stebbins 2003). The ventral surface is mostly unmarked and a pale yellow, bluish, or grey. Dorsal scales are keeled, with 19 rows at midbody. Many individuals have whitish or pale yellow spots on their parietal scales. Males have knobbed ridges on each side of the anal plate, which may facilitate mating. Females have 128 to 174 ventrals and 52 to 93 subcaudals. Males have 133 to 178 ventrals and 61 to 97 subcaudals. Adult males are usually shorter than females with an SVL 83% that of females and males weigh just over half their weight. The posterior pair of chin shields is usually longer than the anterior pair (Perkins 1949, Fitch 1980, Rossman et al. 1996, Powell et al. 1998). *T. sirtalis* occasionally occurs in a stripeless, black phase throughout its range. Black morphs have been found in Lake County (Anderson 1977) and along the upper Missouri River, but these were not positively differentiated from *T. elegans* (Grant Hokit, Carroll College, pers. comm.). Bittner et al. (2002) suggests these melanistic individuals may have a selective thermoregulatory advantage, particularly in large females, by facilitating precise body temperature control during pregnancy, which may increase fecundity, and allow females to give birth earlier; thereby increasing neonate survivorship.

Neonates:

Newborn *T. sirtalis* closely resemble adults in pattern, but are sometimes more distinctly striped (Koch and Peterson 1995). Neonates can vary in size from 12-27.8 cm TL, but average approximately 17 cm. Newborn males are generally larger than females (Fitch 1965, Degenhardt et al. 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Subspecies:

Despite intergradations between subspecies *T. s. fitchi* and *T. s. parietalis* in western Montana, they can generally be differentiated by color and patterning. In *parietalis*, red marks can be found on the upper half of the dorsolateral area, whereas in *fitchi* red markings are absent or barely visible on the upper half. The basal color of the dorsolateral area is very dark to black on *fitchi*, but is usually paler in *parietalis*. On *parietalis* the red blotches may overlap the lateral stripes and occasionally invade the ventrals, whereas the blotches are rarely as low on *fitchi*. Furthermore, *fitchi* usually lack the pair of small black spots located on the anterior edge of each ventral scale, which are usually visible on *parietalis* (Fitch and Maslin 1961, Fitch 1980).

Similar Species:

The red and black spots between the dorsal stripe and side stripes of *T. sirtalis* are absent in the Terrestrial Gartersnake. Generally, the Common Gartersnake has a darker body color with brighter lateral stripes making its striping more distinct than the Terrestrial Gartersnake's (Koch and Peterson 1995). The Common Gartersnake and the Plain's Gartersnake normally have seven upper labial scales, while the Terrestrial Gartersnake usually has eight, although variations in

upper labial counts are not uncommon in Montana (Anderson 1977). The Plain's Gartersnake's dorsal strip is a noticeable bright orange to brick red rather than yellow, and their side stripes are located on the third and fourth scale rows rather than the second and third. Additionally, the creases between upper labial scales of *T. sirtalis* lack the heavy black pigmentation typically present on Montana's other gartersnakes (Hammerson 1999).

Habitat Use/Natural History

T. sirtalis is found in a variety of habitats from deciduous forests, rivers, ponds, marshes, swamps, ditches, meadows, pastures, fence rows, outbuildings, quarries, and trash dumps. Regardless of habitat, they are usually associated with moist or wet vegetation, especially in the Rocky Mountain west, and are regularly seen foraging along shorelines of permanent water (Baxter and Stone 1985, Rossman et al 1996, Ernst and Ernst 2003). In Montana, Common Gartersnakes are associated with the mountainous regions of the state, but are not usually found at the higher elevations, where *T. elegans* appear to replace them (Baxter and Stone 1985, Werner et al. 2004, MTNHP 2007). In western Montana, *T. sirtalis* has been found in approximately one-half the watersheds that *T. elegans* was documented (MTNHP 2007). This more heterogeneous distribution indicates that *T. sirtalis* has more specialized habitat requirements, which could be a result of their greater preference for amphibian prey (Thompson 2004). Despite being the most studied reptile in North America (Rossman et al. 1996), virtually no significant demographic vital rate information (fecundity, survival rates, longevity, denning habits, and dispersal distances) has been collected in Montana. In the west, most significant life history studies of *T. sirtalis* have been conducted on large migratory populations at northern latitudes in Alberta and Manitoba (Gregory 1977b), and in southern populations of Kansas (Fitch 1965). These studies have revealed significant regional differences in life history and behavior. Common Gartersnakes are one of the first species to emerge from their hibernacula, surfacing as early as mid-March to April at lower elevations to June at higher elevations (Fitch 1965, Ernst and Ernst 2003). At large communal dens (supporting thousands of individuals) in Manitoba, males begin emerging in large numbers in late April, reaching peak numbers by mid-May and while females surface more gradually. Upon emergence, the sudden increase in temperature and light experienced, triggers courtship and mating. (Aleksiuk and Gregory 1974b, Bona-Gallo and Licht 1983). Although mating typically occurs early, before dispersal to summer foraging grounds, it can occur into late June and occasionally in the fall. (Fox 1955, Fitch 1965, Medonca and Crews 1989). Courting begins as the female secretes a pheromone that attracts males, sometimes in large numbers that form a "mating ball," of multiple males around a single female (Crews and Garstka 1982). After being contacted by a male, the female may try to escape, remain still, or make a head-jerk movement. The male often struggles with the female for a period before eventually mounting her back and continually pressing his chin along her dorsum while moving anteriorly until his cloaca is aligned with hers. At this stage the male will make rippling movements along his body, shake his tail gently, and then try to lift the female's tail with his own. After a period of five minutes to over an hour, the female will allow insertion of a hemipenis. Insemination usually lasts only a few minutes (Fitch 1965). Afterward, a copulatory plug is inserted by the male which temporarily deters mating by other males as a form of intersexual competition (Devine 1977). However, multiple paternity has been recorded in *T. sirtalis* (Rossman et al. 1996). In the large communal denning populations of Manitoba, Pfrender et al. (2001) has observed males that release female pheromones which induce homosexual courtship and copulation by other males. However, these "she-males" also mate

with females more often than normal males, indicating a selective advantage (Ernst and Ernst 2003). In the case of fall mating, females retain the sperm through the winter and successfully fertilize in the spring (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Fox (1956) found that *T. sirtalis* sperm can potentially remain viable for over a year. Soon after copulation, females migrate to summer foraging grounds. Males often remain near the hibernacula attempting to mate multiple times before dispersing toward the end of May. Mating activity near northern communal dens can last up to 1.5 months (Gregory 1974b, Shine et al. 2001). Generally, males become sexually mature in one or two years when over 40 cm snout-to-vent length (SVL), and females in 2 or 3 years when over 50 cm SVL (Fitch, 1965, Rossman et al. 1996). Females tend to reproduce annually in southern populations but rarely do so in northern populations (Larsen, 1986, Gregory and Larsen 1989). Gravid females are usually found singly but may aggregate in the late summer before giving birth, perhaps because survivorship of neonates increases with higher numbers, or possibly due to limited availability of parturition refuges. In Manitoba, groups of gravid *T. sirtalis* females have been found around rock piles, building foundations, and wooden platforms (Gregory 1975). Females are viviparous, giving birth to live young in early August or September. Generally, most litters average 10-15 young with larger females producing more young. Neonates grow from about 6 to 9.5 inches (15-24 cm) during their first year (Tanner 1949, Rossman et al. 1996). With the short growing season at the high latitudes is important that northern *T. sirtalis* populations navigate rapidly between overwintering/breeding areas and foraging grounds, which can often be large distances in migratory populations. Migrations of 4.3 to 17.7 kilometers have been recorded in Manitoba (Gregory 1974b, Gregory and Stewart 1975) and up to 9 km in Alberta (Lawson 1989) (Rossman et al. 1996). Behavioral studies conducted by Lawson (1989) in northern Alberta indicated these migratory populations use solar orientation in conjunction with an internal clock to navigate, and that juveniles may follow pheromone trails of adults to locate dens in the first year. These navigational abilities have also been found in southern nonmigratory populations, although at lower levels (Lawson 1994). Common Gartersnakes are primarily diurnal, but can be active at night during hot or dry weather (Degenhardt et al. 1996). They are commonly associated with wetland habitat throughout their range, including Montana. Therefore dietary studies have often shown a preference for amphibians (Fitch 1941b). Some populations have shown 90% amphibian consumption in their diet (Ernst and Ernst 2003). However, prey selection is dependent on availability and size of the snake (White and Kolb 1974). Of 375 prey items analyzed by Fitch (2001) in Kansas, most were amphibians, including eight species at multiple life stages. Fitch also found prey preference dependent on age and sex: first year young primarily consumed earthworms, while small mammals were an important diet source for females, whereas smaller males rarely consumed them. Daily activity and foraging patterns can also be influenced by temperature. At a fish hatchery in British Columbia, Nelson and Gregory (2000) found that numbers active of fish-eating snakes increased at the warmest portions of the day when they could withstand cool water, whereas snakes foraging terrestrially at nearby sites avoided these temperatures by foraging during the morning and evening. Common Gartersnakes are known to eat fish, amphibians, worms, passerine birds, shore birds, bird eggs, mollusks, crustaceans, spiders, insects, and small snakes (Ruthven 1908, Fitch 1965, Drummond 1983, Hayward 2002). Specific prey reported in Montana includes leeches (*Haemopsis grandis* and *Erpobdella punctata*), slugs (*Deroceras* sp.), amphibians (*Rana luteiventris*, *Rana pipiens*, *Bufo boreas*, *Ambystoma macrodactylum*, *Hyla regilla*), voles (*Microtus* sp.), Sparrows (*Spizella* sp.), and earth worms (*Lumbricus* sp.) (Anderson 1977, Thompson 2004). In sympatric populations, *T. sirtalis* has a diet more

specialized to amphibians, while the diet of *T. elegans* is more diverse (Fitch 1941b). In western Montana, Anderson (1977) noted that *T. sirtalis* consumed 46% amphibians, while *T. elegans* consumed just 20% amphibians. Both species also favored leeches, which made up 41% of *T. sirtalis* and 44% of *T. elegans* diets. At high elevation water bodies in Montana, anurans, particularly Spotted Frogs (*Rana luteiventris*), become the main food source for both species, with *T. sirtalis* showing a preference for juveniles and adults and *T. elegans* preferring larvae (Thompson 2004). Common gartersnakes are not skilled fish hunters and are generally only capable of capturing them when found in enclosed areas, such as shallow drying pools or fish hatcheries. In Oregon, *T. sirtalis* is known to consume tadpoles of the introduced Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) (Rossman et al. 1996), which is also invading Montana (Maxell 2003, MTNHP 2007). Common Gartersnakes have become specially adapted to consuming toxic amphibians. They have evolved immunity to toxic toads (genera; *Bufo*, *Spea*, *Scaphiopus*, and *Gastrophryne*) (Koch and Peterson 1995, Degenhardt et al. 1996) and Rough-skinned Newts (*Taricha granulosa*). They are up to 2,000 times less susceptible to *T. granulosa* toxins where their range overlaps. The level of resistance corresponds with the abundance of newts and their toxicity level along a geographic gradient (Nussbaum et al 1983, Brodie et al 2002). In Oregon, Williams et al. (2002) noted that some individuals could assess the level of toxicity of individual newts, regurgitating newts that exceed their toxicity resistance level, while consuming the others. Common predators of *T. sirtalis* include raccoons, various birds of prey, Eastern Racers, shrews, weasels, and coyotes (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Their first defense against predators is to run. Their striping may aid in avoiding capture by creating an illusion that they are traveling slower than actuality causing predators to miss (Koch and Peterson 1995), or by simply making it difficult for predators to focus on them (Brodie 1993). When caught or cornered, they will inflate their lungs and flatten their head, while exuding feces, foul smelling musk secretions and uric acid. They can also be aggressive, inflating their lungs and flattening their head while exuding foul-smelling musk secretions, feces, and uric acid. Larger individuals may aggressively strike and bite, sometimes drawing blood (Ernst and Ernst 2003, Werner et al. 2003). When grasped firmly, *T. sirtalis* tails can break and continue wriggling to divert the predator's attention. The tails will grow back, although not to their original size or shape. Individuals with these stubbed tails swim and crawl more slowly and therefore are likely at greater risk of predation (Fitch 2003). Common Gartersnakes aggregate near hibernacula up to six weeks before retreating underground. They overwinter below frost-line in mammal burrows, rock crevices, talus slopes, gravel banks, earth dams, causeways, old wells, ant mounds, crayfish burrows, beaver and muskrat lodges, stumps and rotting logs. They are sometimes found completely or partially submersed in water, which may inhibit freezing (Lachner 1942, Costanzo 1989b). With an ability to function at temperatures lower than any other reptile (Fitch 1965), northern populations are well-adapted behaviorally and physiologically to survive the long winters and short growing seasons at high latitudes (Aleksiuk 1976, Crews and Garstka 1982). In northern Alberta, a hibernating individual's temperature ranged 1.8 to 6.5 degrees Celsius through the winter (Rossman et al 1996), and cloacal temperatures of emerging males have been recorded as low as 0.5 degrees Celsius. Overwintering conditions are best when hibernacula stay wet enough to avoid desiccation and the temperature stays slightly above freezing. However, they are able to endure short periods above frost-line at temperatures low as -2 to -3 degrees Celsius, although large numbers often freeze to death (Bailey 1949, Fitch 1965 Churchill and Story 1992). Common Gartersnakes hibernate singly or communally, sometimes in very large numbers from 500-600 (Aleksiuk 1976b) to over 10,000 in the limestone sinkholes of Manitoba

(Larsen and Gregory 1989). Gregory (1974b) suggests that communal denning has an adaptive advantage for the short growing seasons of northern climates by insuring snakes are together to breed immediately after emergence. Similar nearby hibernacula go virtually unused in some years, indicating communal denning is not due to a lack of available dens. Aggregations may also have a thermoregulatory advantage by maintaining higher body temperatures during long northern winters (Aleksiuk 1977). Due to an absence of local data, it is unclear if similar-sized denning aggregations exist in Montana. However, similar climate, landscape, and ecology are present, suggesting aggregations probably exist. Groups of 7-10 individuals were observed in late August in the Bitterroot Mountains of western Montana aggregating around temporary pools with high densities of Columbia Spotted Frog larvae (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Common Gartersnakes have been reported hibernating communally with other snakes found in Montana; the Smooth Greensnake (*Opheodrys vernalis*) and Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) (Lachner 1942). Outside of Montana, typical summer population densities have been documented from 1.7/ha in Manitoba to 45-89/ha in Ohio. Likewise, average home range (or "activity range") data varies regionally from approximately 8100 m² (0.8 ha) in Michigan (Carpenter 1952a) to 142,000 m² (14 ha) in Kansas (Fitch 1965). In Montana, Anderson (1977) reported a dispersal distance of at least 2 km. Adult annual survival rates range from 34% in Manitoba (Gregory 1977b) to 50% in Kansas (Fitch 1965), to 67% in the Northwest Territories (Larsen and Gregory 1989). Depending on the region, annual survivorships of neonates ranged from 29% to 43%, and 33% to 50% of smaller snakes have been known to die while overwintering in hibernacula, (Rossman et al. 1996). Common Gartersnakes can survive at least nine years in nature (Werner et al 2004), although average longevity is probably much less. In Manitoba, Larsen and Gregory (1989) noted that 34 individuals at an annual denning site had survived at least six years. In captivity, a specimen reportedly lived over 14 years (Ernst and Ernst 2003).

Status and Conservation

Common Gartersnakes are well distributed across the state and appear to be secure in west and south-central Montana. However, observation records in the northern and eastern Great Plains region of Montana are scarce. It is unknown if this is due to their actual absence, or a lack of reported observations. As suggested by Fitch and Maslin (1961), records that do exist may be misidentified *T. radix*, which are common in the region. Therefore, their status in Montana's Great Plains region cannot currently be assessed. Fitch (2001) noted that large denning aggregations, mating behavior, and dispersal patterns found at denning sites in Manitoba are not universal traits of *T. sirtalis*, but behaviors resulting from selective pressures at the northern limits of their range since these behaviors had not been noted at more southerly latitudes, such as Kansas. With this regional variability and lack of local data, it is difficult to characterize Montana population, but it is likely they exhibit characteristics of both northern and southern populations due to the variability in climate and ecosystems found across the state. Despite this adaptability and their secure status, the following items are potential conservation concerns for the Common Gartersnake. (1) *T. sirtalis* populations may be showing declines in areas where anurans continue to disappear, such as high elevation water bodies. In mountain lakes of the Sierra Nevada, researches discovered the probability of finding a similar species (*Thamnophis elegans*) in lakes with amphibians was 30 times greater than in lakes without amphibians. Introduction of non-native trout was positively correlated with the reduction of the amphibian and gartersnake populations (Matthews et al. 2002). There is evidence that the Western Toad

(*Bufo boreas*) and the Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*) have experienced declines in western Montana, which could pose an indirect threat (Wootton 1994) to local *T. sirtalis* populations, especially at higher elevations where alternative prey and foraging habitat may be more scarce (Jennings 1992, Anderson 2004). For example, *T. sirtalis* cannot successfully prey-switch to fish because they lack the adequate fish capturing ability that the often sympatric *T. elegans* possesses (Drummond 1983), making them more vulnerable to amphibian reductions (Rossman et al. 1996). Furthermore, Peterson and Koch (1995) suggest that the apparent decline in Common Gartersnakes in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks is related to the significant declines of Northern Leopard Frogs and Western toads, both of which have been linked to the spread of both *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (chytrid fungus) (Daszak et al. 1999), non-native species introductions, and other causes (Maxell 2000).

(2) Over-grazing, especially along riparian corridors, can trample vegetation and alter soil structure, which are both important components of gartersnake habitat (Kauffman and Krueger 1984, Szaro et al. 1985). Szaro et al. (1985) found five times as many Terrestrial Gartersnakes along a stream in ungrazed cattle enclosures than along grazed portions. Common Gartersnakes are probably similarly affected along heavily grazed wetland margins. Furthermore, grazing is known to reduce the abundance of many invertebrates (Hutchingson and King 1980) and amphibians, which can both directly and indirectly affect prey availability.

(3) Roads often have negative impacts on population size and distribution of snakes and other reptiles. High road density has been positively correlated to low population size, and restriction to roadless areas, which can lead to local extirpations. (Rudolph et al. 1998, Jochimsen et al. 2004). While this has not been studied exclusively on *T. sirtalis* in Montana, some populations are likely affected in areas of high road density or where roads intersect travel corridors, and *T. sirtalis* is often observed basking on roads (Paul Hendricks, pers. obs.). J. Chan reported more than 10,000 *T. sirtalis parietalis* killed by cars in one fall while returning to den sites in northern Manitoba (Rossman 1996).

(4) Many snakes show their highest mortality rates during active periods, such as mate-searching, egg-laying migrations, migrations to hibernacula, or dispersals of neonates after birth. Causes of mortality during such dispersals included natural predation, domesticated animals, and road kill (Bonnet et al. 1999).

(5) Large aggregations of overwintering *T. sirtalis* may be susceptible to any hibernacula disturbance, and by large scale collecting for the scientific or pet trades. After spring emergence, populations in Manitoba were greatly reduced by such collecting (Rossman et al. 1996).

(6) The Common Gartersnake's tendency to utilize a small home range, its place as predator on the food chain, and its habit of consuming both aquatic and terrestrial prey, make them highly susceptible to bioaccumulation pesticides and heavy metals, and therefore an excellent bioindicator of these pollutants where they enter the environment (Stafford et al. 1976, Anderson 1977). Anderson (1977) compared the content of heavy metals in gartersnakes from six riparian control sites in Lake and Flathead counties with two sites known to have industrial pollution, Fred Bur Creek (contaminated with mercury) and an area surrounding an East Helena smelter (contaminated with lead). Concentrations of lead were approximately three times higher at East Helena and concentrations of mercury nearly twice as high at Fred Bur Creek than concentrations of those metals at the control sites. Despite adequate habitat, gartersnakes were rarely observed at the heavily polluted sites, qualitatively suggesting poor population viability caused by these heavy metals.

(7) *T. sirtalis* shows remarkable regional variability in life history and behavior, evidenced by studies in contrasting environments. For example, the large denning aggregations, long distance migrations, massive mortalities, presence of she-males, and formation of "mating balls" are absent in Kansas populations (Fitch 2001). Even within the

northern latitudes of Canada significant differences in reproductive traits exist between eastern and western populations (Gregory and Larsen 1993). Due to the lack of data for Montana, coupled the diversity in landscape, climate, and habitat encompassed by the state, it is possible that Montana *T. sirtalis* populations have similarly diverse characteristics depending upon local landscape, climate, and habitat. Therefore, while probably secure regionally, local populations may have specific vulnerabilities not found in other populations, which may go unnoticed while making management decisions.

Research and Management Suggestions

1. Initially, thorough surveys should be conducted to identify the northern boundary of *T. sirtalis* distribution in eastern Montana north of the Yellowstone River. This can be done by conducting systematic surveys in suitable habitat, or by educating the public (e.g. local landowners and resource managers) to discern *T. radix* from *T. sirtalis* and encouraging them to report observations.
2. Manage for viable amphibian populations, especially anurans, which are important in assuring viable gartersnake populations at high elevations. (e.g. limit predatory gamefish introductions in mountain lakes).
3. Monitor local amphibian populations and *T. elegans* populations concurrently to identify potential effects of shifts in amphibian abundance.
4. Through research, monitoring, and management actions investigate and minimize the extent of anthropogenic impacts to *T. sirtalis* populations. For example, as strong bioindicators, gartersnakes can be monitored for heavy metals and pesticides near areas subject to exposure.
5. Grazing exclosures can be constructed along selected portions of heavily impacted wetland margins to promote vegetation regeneration.
6. If large denning aggregations are located, such as those found in Manitoba and Alberta, juxtaposition of dispersal routes and human dangers (roads, domesticated animals, collecting, etc.) should be studied and considered in local management decisions.
7. Hibernacula supporting such aggregations should be protected from large scale poaching to support the scientific and pet trade.
8. Long-term affects of road-building on Common Gartersnake populations should be investigated in areas of increased road development. Areas with dense road development, such as regions being developed for coal bed natural gas extraction, should be particularly targeted for baseline surveys and post-development monitoring.
9. Due to the extreme regional variability of *T. sirtalis*, evidence of specialization at the local level, and a lack of in-state data, broad generalizations about demographic vital rate data and life history information should not be made from nationwide data, but rather be assessed at the local level before making management decisions for a restricted area.
10. Life history and ecological studies for *T. sirtalis* should be conducted within the state to aid with these assessments.

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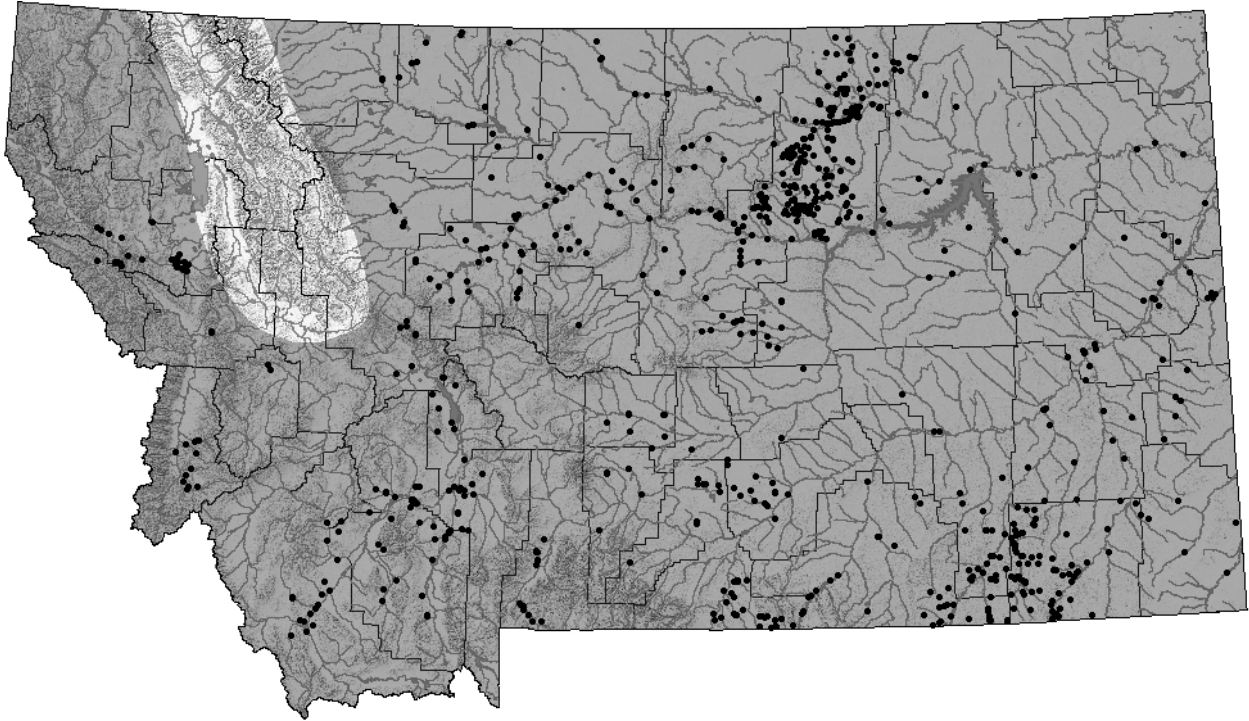
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Prairie Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*)

Up-to-date distribution and status information can be found on the Montana Natural Heritage Program's TRACKER website at <http://mtnhp.org>



Distribution/Taxonomy

Prairie rattlesnakes range across western North America from Canada to Mexico. In Montana, the prairie rattlesnake (*C. v. viridis*), ranges throughout Montana and the Great Plains states south through Texas to northern Mexico (Stebbins 2003). Two subspecies, *C. v. oregonus* and *C. v. lutosus*, have been found near Montana's western border (Stebbins 2003), but have not been documented within the state. Prairie rattlesnakes have been documented in 44 counties in Montana.

Maximum Elevation

2,255 m (7,400 ft) in Park County (Tom Lemke, pers. com., MTNHP 2007).

Identification

Young:

Newborn coloration resembles adults with total length ranging 18-33 cm (7-13 in.) (Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Average weight for newborns was 12 g in Saskatchewan (Gannon and Secoy 1985) and 17 g in British Columbia (Macartney and Gregory 1988).

Adults:

A key identifying feature of adult prairie rattlesnakes is the horny, lobed rattle at the tip of the tail. Newborn juveniles have no true rattle, only a silent nub referred to as a button. Prairie rattlesnakes have a triangular head and 35-55 brown/black blotches extending down the back on a tan or greenish background. There are heat-sensitive pits visible below each eye and eyes have vertical pupils. Most scales along the back are highly keeled (ridged) and there are 14-15 upper

labial (lip) scales and 15-16 lower labial scales. Males are slightly larger than females with total length ranging 60-114 cm (approx. 2-4 ft) (Hammerson 1999, St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Similar species:

Juvenile racers (*Coluber constrictor*) and gophersnakes (*Pituophis catenifer*) also have blotched dorsal patterns but juvenile racers are much smaller and have smooth scales dorsally.

Gophersnakes may vibrate their tails when provoked, however, there is no morphological rattle present as in the rattlesnake.

Also, prairie rattlesnakes have vertical pupils while gophersnakes and racers do not.

Habitat use/Natural History

Prairie rattlesnakes occupy a broad range of habitats in Montana including grasslands, sagebrush, river bottoms, drier ponderosa pine forests, and rock outcroppings (Werner et al. 2004).

Hammerson (1999) noted that rattlesnakes in Colorado only seemed to avoid permanently wet areas and high mountain regions. Diller and Wallace (1996) captured most rattlesnakes in rocky habitats, such as canyon rims and outcroppings even though rocky habitat comprised <5% of their study area in Idaho. Diller and Wallace (1984) also noted that rattlesnakes captured in talus were typically near the top of the talus slope, where less large boulders accumulated.

Rattlesnakes can be located under rocks and in brushy vegetation, woodpiles, and rodent burrows during the summer months (Watson and Russell 1997, Hammerson 1999). Largely diurnal during the summer, most activity occurs in the morning and late evening with individuals seeking some form of shelter at the hottest point of the day (Gannon and Secoy 1985, Diller and Wallace 1996). Prairie rattlesnakes breed in early to midsummer (Hammerson 1999), however, Macartney and Gregory (1988) noted that *C. v. oreganus* in British Columbia did not mate until late July/early August. Females will give birth to 4-21 live young in late summer/early September (Hammerson 1999). Diller and Wallace (1996) found clutch size averaged 8.3 and correlated positively with female body size for rattlesnakes in southwestern Idaho. Males reach sexual maturity at 2-3 years, whereas females typically do not breed until 4-6 years of age (Diller and Wallace 1984). Although there is great variation among studies, roughly 50% of females will reproduce annually (Aldridge 1979a). Pregnant females will reduce their foraging and food intake (Gannon and Secoy 1984, Macartney and Gregory 1988) and depend largely on fat reserves for successful reproduction (Diller and Wallace 1984). As a result, they are known to congregate at rookeries with other pregnant females during summer to facilitate thermoregulation and embryo development (Graves and Duvall 1987). Rookery sites have been found beneath large, flat rocks often over rodent burrows (Watson and Russell 1997). Pregnant females tend to use rookery sites relatively close to hibernacula (Gannon and Secoy 1985, Hammerson 1999) while non-pregnant females and male rattlesnakes can disperse quite far from hibernacula to summer range (King and Duvall 1990). Depending on food availability, summer range can be as near as 0.5 km (0.30 mi) or as far as 6 km (3.7 mi) from hibernacula (Hammerson 1999), although the average likely falls in the range of 1.5 km (0.93 mi) (Hirth et al. 1969). Dispersal from hibernacula usually occurs 3-4 weeks after emergence, is correlated with temperature and appears quite synchronous among individuals at a given site (Gannon and Secoy 1985, Diller and Wallace 1996). Prairie rattlesnakes return to hibernacula in late September/early October and will remain there until April or May of the following year (Parker and Brown 1974, Hammerson 1999). Hibernation is communal and can even occur with other species (Hirth 1966, Jacob and Painter 1980, Gannon and Secoy 1985). Rattlesnakes will

overwinter in talus, rock outcroppings, rodent burrows, and even open cellars (Diller and Wallace 1984, Macartney et al. 1990, Hammerson 1999). Despite being able to undergo a shallow torpor (Jacob and Painter 1980) adult rattlesnakes can lose about 8% and hatchlings 25% of their body weight overwinter (Hirth 1966). In addition to weight loss, rattlesnakes can experience elevated mortality rates overwinter with up to one-third of adults perishing (Hirth 1966). However, Parker and Brown (1974) reported overwinter mortality less than 4% for adults and Hammerson (1999) reported that overwinter survival is quite high even for hatchlings which do not feed prior to hibernating. Charland (1989) estimated overwinter survival of rattlesnake neonates in British Columbia was 55% and independent of initial weight prior to the onset of winter. Diet consists mainly of small rodents. Diller and Wallace (1996) found ground squirrels (*Spermophilus sp.*) and deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) comprised most of the diet for rattlesnakes in southwestern Idaho and Macartney (1989) found voles (*Microtus sp.*) were quite important for rattlesnakes in British Columbia. Prairie rattlesnakes are relatively sedentary predators who ambush their prey, injecting them with venom delivered through fangs (Hammerson 1999). Most prey will travel a short distance after being bitten (Hayes 1993) and the rattlesnake will use scent, odors from both venom and prey, to follow their trail and relocate prey (Lavin-Murcio et al. 1993). Because they are ambush predators, daily movements of prairie rattlesnakes may vary according to local prey abundance (Hammerson 1999). Estimates of total distance traveled in a season are variable and range from 2.7-3.5 km (1.7-2.2 mi) (King and Duvall 1990) to 0.65-0.87 km (0.40-0.54 mi) (Ashton 2003). Rattlesnakes are prey largely for raptors, but also badgers (*Taxidea taxus*) and coyotes (*Canis latrans*) (Hammerson 1999, Werner et al. 2004). Humans are the largest source of mortality for rattlesnakes (Hammerson 1999). Rattlesnakes have survived in captivity to nearly 30 years, however, maximum age in the wild is thought to be much younger (Hammerson 1999).

Status and Conservation

Prairie rattlesnakes occur on both sides of the Continental Divide in Montana. Although most records are from the eastern portion of the state, rattlesnakes do inhabit drier sagebrush and ponderosa pine habitats in western Montana (Maxell et al. 2003). Highly urbanized areas and intensively farmed regions typically do not support high numbers of rattlesnakes (Hammerson 1999). Similar to other species of snakes, rattlesnakes can be impacted by disturbance to their hibernacula and rookery sites. Rattlesnakes show substantial site fidelity for overwintering sites year after year and even small disturbances to these sites may negatively impact the snake. Humans may disturb hibernacula incidentally or purposely for commercial collection or population control (Parker and Brown 1974, Hammerson 1999). Denning sites that are repeatedly disturbed will cease to support snakes (Parker and Brown 1974, Hammerson 1999). Although rattlesnakes may make limited movements within dens during winter (Marion and Sexton 1984), at body temperatures <10° C (50° F) the rattlesnake's ability to move is impaired (Jacob and Painter 1980) and they may not respond to human disturbance as effectively at cooler temperatures (Prior and Weatherhead 1994). Roadways may also impact rattlesnakes near hibernacula. For example, more than 1,500 rattlesnakes were killed on a roadway in Colorado during migration to denning sites in the autumn (Hammerson 1999). In general, snake mortality on roadways has been documented widely with some drivers even purposely swerving to kill snakes (Langley et al. 1989, Krivda 1993, Rosen and Lowe 1994, Hammerson 1999). By far, humans are the foremost threat to the rattlesnake. Many rattlesnakes are killed out of fear, especially when found near homes. Sport hunting of rattlesnakes is also common and annual

“rattlesnake roundups” result in thousands of individuals killed each year (Weir 1992, Arena et al. 1995). While rattlesnakes possess a highly effective rattle to deter intruders (Prior and Weatherhead 1994) their rattle may actually serve as a device by which man detects and kills them (Parker and Brown 1974). Rattlesnakes are the only poisonous snake in Montana and are widely feared because of their venomous bite. Despite the snake’s ability to avoid most confrontations through sounding its rattle, it will bite, particularly when provoked. Rattlesnake venom is highly toxic and can cause paralysis, cardiovascular and respiratory debilitations, and even death (Hammerson 1999). However, of 45 reported prairie rattlesnake bites in Montana from 1996-2004, none resulted in death (Timmerman 2004). Chemical contamination may adversely affect snakes (Werner et al. 2004), however changes in agricultural practices and federal laws can sometimes mitigate these impacts. For example, DDT levels in snakes have declined since the banning of the pesticide (Fleet and Plapp 1978). Snakes may harbor pollutants indicative of overall environmental health (Bauerle et al. 1975, Stafford et al. 1976, Anderson 1977), thereby adding to the value of their conservation and persistence. In addition, rattlesnakes consume deer mice and other rodents which may help control the spread of harmful viruses such as hantavirus (Degenhardt et al. 1996).

Research and Management Suggestions

1. The rapid growing human population in the valleys of western Montana, combined with human fears and the tendency to kill snakes, especially poisonous species, protection measures may be in order in this region.
2. If location is known, protect hibernation sites from disturbance or destruction.
3. Outreach programs that provide the public with scientifically accurate and lucid information about rattlesnakes should be encouraged and supported whenever possible.
4. Emphasis should be placed on rodent and disease control instead of elimination of snakes.
5. Roadways kill large numbers of snakes in some regions. Research that addresses these impacts at a population level and can examine the efficacy of various mitigation actions such as culvert crossings is needed.

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SPECIES ACCOUNTS FOR AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE SPECIES POTENTIALLY PRESENT IN MONTANA

Great Basin Spadefoot (*Spea intermontana*)

Status Overview

The Great Basin spadefoot (*Spea intermontana*) has been reported as occurring in southwest Montana by Black (1970). In addition, in a review of amphibians and reptiles on the Beaverhead National Forest in the 1970's Timken (No Date) reported observation records for the plains spadefoot (*Spea bombifrons*) in the vicinity of Dillon, more than 100 miles southeast of the nearest reported locality for *S. bombifrons*. During the summer of 2000 spadefoot toads were heard calling on private lands at several sites immediately north of Dillon. Due to the brevity of the visit land owners were not contacted and individuals were unable to be collected. However, breeding calls were identical to those of *S. bombifrons* and were slower than those of *S. intermontana* (Bryce Maxell, pers. obs.). Thus, it is likely that the spadefoots in the Dillon area are the plains spadefoot. However, it is possible that the Great Basin spadefoot may be present in southwest Montana as well. Nussbaum et al. (1983) show records of the Great Basin spadefoot north of the Snake River Plain approximately 100 miles south of Dillon and seemingly suitable habitat occurs over much of the intervening area. More thorough surveys and collections of individuals throughout southwest Montana will allow the species present in the Dillon area to be identified with certainty and will provide more support for the presence or absence of the Great Basin spadefoot. One factor hindering the detection of either species is their cryptic nature. Spadefoots spend a majority of their life underground and are usually only active on the surface at night and after heavy rains. Their loud distinctive breeding calls after heavy rains in the summer and the presence of larvae in ephemeral water bodies offer the best chance of detection.

Identification

Eggs:

Laid in smaller clusters about 15 to 20 mm in diameter containing 20 to 40 eggs (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Egg morphology has not been described in detail (Hall 1998), but would be expected to be similar to those of the plains spadefoot. Corkran and Thoms (1996) describe each ovum as tan or gray above and cream below.

Larvae:

Dark gray, brown, or black dorsally and lighter iridescent gold with gold or brassy flecks ventrally (Hall 1998). Dorsal tail fin is clear with dendritic pigmentation and ventral tail fin is clear anteriorly and dendritically pigmented posteriorly (Hall 1998). Eyes are located dorsally. TL of 5-70 mm (Hall 1998).

Juveniles and Adults:

Pupil of the eye is vertical. A large and usually soft or glandular bump or boss is present between the eyes (Hall 1998). A single black digging "spade" is present on the soles of the hind feet. Dorsal color general matches the surroundings with a base color of gray, brown, or olive mottled with a darker color (Hall 1998). Four complete or broken lighter stripes are usually present laterally and dorsally and warts may be red or orange and located within dark brown or

black spots or blotches (Hall 1998). Ventral color is light gray, cream, or white. SVL of 20-63 mm (Hall 1998).

Similar Species:

See account on the plains spadefoot. Adults of the plains spadefoot have a hard bony lump or “boss” present between the eyes (Hall 1998).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found on or adjacent to sandy soils in sagebrush flats, shrublands, and pinon-juniper woodlands, and irrigated lands (Hall 1998, Hammerson 1999). Adults retreat to self excavated burrows in loose soils during periods when terrestrial conditions are not favorable (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Hammerson 1999). Adults are present on the surface on warm nights during damp and dry weather where they feed on a variety of insects (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Hammerson 1999). Breeding and egg deposition takes place in warm temporary (more rarely permanent) water bodies formed by extensive rains from May to July (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Hammerson 1999). Eggs hatch in about two days and larvae feed on both plant and animal matter until they metamorphose in 19 to 31 days (Hall 1998).

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Canadian Toad (*Bufo hemiophrys*)

Status Overview

The presence of the Canadian Toad in Montana has not been positively confirmed, but they were reported to have been observed in 1966 at a single site in Daniels County at an elevation of approximately 790 M (2,600 ft) (Black and Bragg 1968, Black 1970, 1971). Therefore, at the present time their presence in Montana must only be regarded as possible and their status must be regarded as unknown. Systematic surveys of the wetlands and streams in Sheridan, Daniels, Roosevelt, and Valley Counties should be undertaken in order to attempt to confirm the species presence in the state. Two subspecies are recognized. The Canadian toad, *Bufo h. hemiophrys* ranges across the prairies, aspen parkland, and boreal forest of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and southwestern Manitoba to northeastern South Dakota and central Minnesota at elevations up to 1,200 M (3,940 ft) (Stebbins 2003, Russell and Bauer 2000). The Wyoming toad, *Bufo h. baxteri* exists as an isolated and Federally endangered population in southeast Wyoming in the Laramie Basin (Baxter et al. 1982, Lewis et al. 1985, Jennings and Anderson 1997).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs have apparently not been fully described in the scientific literature. Laid in single strings containing up to 6,660 eggs (Porter 1968, Russell and Bauer 2000). The egg string is scalloped with the jelly string being pinched between each egg (Russell and Bauer 2000). Each ovum is pigmented black above and lies within the outer jelly layer that composes the string. Ovum diameter has apparently not been reported.

Larvae:

Larvae have apparently not been fully described in the scientific literature. Blackish above and lighter below. Throat and chest are clear and tail fins are at least partly unpigmented (Stebbins 2003, Russell and Bauer 2000). The tail musculature is dark except for a narrow light ventral area (Stebbins 2003). TL has apparently not been reported.

Juveniles and Adults:

Parallel cranial crests are fused between the eyes to form a bump or boss which may or may not have a furrow between the ridges (Cope 1886, Russell and Bauer 2000). The hind feet each have two dark digging “spades” on their soles. Large parotid glands are present behind the eyes. Dorsal background color is usually grayish green to brown (more rarely reddish) with dark spots that are surrounded by white halos and are themselves spotted with red (Cope 1886, Cook 1964). A white stripe usually extends down the center of the back. The ventral surface is spotted with black or gray over a background of white which becomes more yellowish laterally (Cope 1886, Russell and Bauer 2000). SVL of 10-72 mm (Tester and Breckenridge 1964, Underhill 1961).

Similar Species:

If present, Canadian toads are likely to only be found in the extreme northeastern corner of the state. New metamorphs or juveniles may not have well developed cranial crests and may need to be compared by color patterns (see accounts). Both adult Woodhouse’s toads and adult Great Plains toads are larger and have well developed cranial crests present behind the eyes and are larger in size (see accounts). Eggs and larvae of Woodhouse’s toads, Great Plains toads, and

Canadian toads are very similar and may not be differentiable by even thoroughly trained herpetologists. However eggs and larvae of Woodhouse's toads and Canadian toads are much more likely to be found in permanent or semi-permanent waters than those of Great Plains toads.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found closely associated with permanent waters containing emergent vegetation in short-grass prairies, forests, and on river floodplains (Underhill 1961, Roberts and Lewin 1979). Adults feed on a variety of invertebrates and smaller vertebrates and apparently shelter in the water or shallow self excavated burrows in the summer, and in burrows up to 1.3 meters deep in the winter (Moore and Strickland 1954, Underhill 1961, Tester and Breckenridge 1964, Roberts and Lewin 1979, Cook and Cook 1981, Kuyt 1991). Breeding probably occurs in May or early June and eggs are deposited around vegetation or loose on the bottom of the shallower waters of lakes, ponds, ditches, marshes, or slow moving streams (Black 1970, Roberts and Lewin 1979). Tadpole diet has apparently not been described. Tadpoles usually transform in 7 to 11 weeks (Tamsitt 1962, Porter 1968, Roberts and Lewin 1979). Adults appear to be more closely tied to water than other toad species, but are known to migrate at least 215 meters from overwintering to breeding sites and movements up to 390 meters have been reported (Breckenridge and Tester 1961, Tester and Breckenridge 1964).

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Wood Frog (*Rana sylvatica*)

Status Overview

Reliable records for the wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*) have been reported 40 miles south of the Wyoming state line in the Big Horn Mountains (Dunlap 1977, Garber 1992), just north of the Canadian border near Waterton Park in Alberta (Russell and Bauer 2000), and just west of the Idaho state line in northeast Idaho (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Similar, and seemingly suitable, habitat exists adjacent to these localities in the Big Horn Mountains on the Crow Indian Reservation in south-central Montana and along the state border in northwest Montana (Hart et al. 1998). To date no surveys have been conducted in the Big Horn Mountains in south-central Montana and it is possible that surveys in suitable habitat above 2,400 meters elevation may reveal the presence of isolated populations. Their presence in northwest Montana may be less likely because extensive surveys recently conducted in that area failed to detect them (Werner and Reichel 1994, Werner and Reichel 1996).

Identification

Eggs:

Eggs are laid in a single orange to grapefruit sized globular mass and are laid individually or communally in groups of up to or more than 60 egg masses (Nussbaum et al. 1983, Corn and Livo 1989). Egg masses contain from 711 to 1,248 eggs ($X = 876$, $N = 15$, for estimates at two sites in the mountains of Wyoming) (Corn and Livo 1989). Each ovum is black above, white below, and surrounded by two jelly layers (Livezey and Wright 1947). Ovum diameters are approximately 1.7 mm, but total egg diameters, including the two jelly layers, are approximately 5.0 mm (Livezey and Wright 1947).

Larvae:

Base color is blackish to olive-gray with darker speckles above, shiny bronze or pinkish laterally, and silvery pink below (Hammerson 1999). A white line occurs along the edge of the mouth (Russell and Bauer 2000). The dorsal and ventral tail fin are mostly clear, but some dark spots and blotches are present (Corkran and Thoms 2006, Hammerson 1999). TL of 7-60 mm (Nussbaum et al. 1983).

Juveniles and Adults:

A wide dark black mask extends from the tip of the snout through the eye and tympanum to just above the front leg. A white stripe may or may not extend down the center of the back (Corkran and Thoms 2006). The skin is smooth with a gray, light brown, or bronze base color with or without dark spots. Ventrally white with dark markings laterally, on the throat, and occasionally on the chest. SVL of 13-83 mm (Martof 1970).

Similar Species:

Adult Columbia spotted frogs do not have a white stripe down the center of the back, have salmon color on the thighs ventrally, and have a much thinner and fainter stripe from the snout through the eye and tympanum. In addition Columbia spotted frog adults have numerous black spots with light centers dorsally.

Habitat Use/Natural History

Found along temporary ponds, lakes and stream shores, but adults also move into shaded portions of adjacent forests or brush where there is damp ground litter. Adults are largely terrestrial during the non-breeding season, but are usually not found far from water (Nussbaum et al. 1983). In Wyoming they were found only in shallow glacial kettle ponds without fish and most frogs were found in areas with extensive shallows and dense emergent sedges on the north side of the ponds (Garber 1992). Adults are freeze tolerant and overwinter terrestrially in burrows, root channels and crevices (Nussbaum et al. 1983). Adults may migrate up to one half kilometer to small pools, backwaters and beaver ponds which are used for breeding (Hammerson 1999). Breeding takes place from March to June and eggs are often deposited communally on emergent or submerged vegetation. Eggs hatch at different times depending on water temperatures and tadpoles metamorphose in 40-90 days (Martof 1970, Nussbaum et al. 1983). Low pH in breeding ponds causes low egg and larval survival (Gascon and Planas 1986).

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Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma douglassii*)

Status Overview

The short-horned lizard was recently split into the Pigmy Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma douglasii*), the northwestern short-horned lizard subspecies prior to the split, and the Greater Short-horned Lizard (Zamudio et al. 1997, Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003), encompassing the other five subspecies prior to the reclassification (Reeve 1952). Cope (1872) described a *P. douglasii* specimen from “Carrington’s Lake Montana”, an unknown locality apparently in present day Gallatin, Madison or Beaverhead Counties near Yellowstone National Park. Cope’s (1872) description clearly identifies the specimen as *P. douglasii* by modern Taxonomy (Zamudio et al. 1997, Crother et al. 2008). Although the current status of this specimen is unknown, another specimen collected in “Centennial Valley, Montana” by George Kennedy in August 1936 has been identified as *P. douglasii* (St. John 2002, Al St. John, Bend, OR, pers. comm.). Nussbaum et al. (1983) show reliable records for *P. douglasii* only a few km south of the Idaho State line near Monida Pass and seemingly suitable habitat exists in the valleys of southwest Montana. Given the cryptic nature of the species and lack of surveys suitable for detection, the presence of *P. douglasii* in southwestern Montana is possible.

Identification

Juveniles and Adults:

The body of the Pigmy Short-horned Lizard is small and oval with a large head and short tail that is very thick at its base. Adults rarely exceed 6 cm in snout-to-vent length and the maximum total length for a large animal is only about 9 cm (St. John 2002). The surface of the back has many small pointed scales and there is a fringe of small spines at the interface of the dorsal and ventral surfaces. The “horns” on the back of the head are merely small nubbins which usually project at a nearly vertical angle. The ventral surface is white or pale yellow and the dorsal surface has two paired rows of dark brown to black blotches on a gray or grayish brown background (St. John 2002). Young resemble the adults in coloration and morphology

Similar Species:

With the exception of the Greater Short-horned Lizard (*P. hernandesi*), the broad flattened body separates the Pigmy Short-horned Lizard from the other lizard species regularly documented in Montana. Adults of the Pigmy Short-horned Lizard are much smaller than the greater short-horned lizard, they lack the wide notch between the horns on the back of the head that gives the head of the greater short-horned lizard a “heart-shape” appearance when viewed from above, and the small horns on the back of the head project almost vertically, rather than horizontally as in the greater short-horned lizard (St. John 2002, Werner et al. 2004).

Habitat Use/Natural History

Pigmy Short-horned Lizards (*P. douglasii*) have a much greater tolerance to cold climates than other short-horned lizards and are distributed up to elevations of at least 6,000 ft (1,830 m) in some Pacific Northwest mountain ranges (St. John 2002). The species is found in open sagebrush rangelands, bunchgrass plains, and sunny clearings in juniper and pine woodlands. In the Cascade Mountains of Oregon and northern California, the species occurs in volcanic pumice sand openings in pine forests and their distribution in general is limited to areas with sandy soils that they can burrow into (St. John 2002). They are often found in areas with ant hills since ants

are the preferred prey and scattered bushes are often used for cover (St. John 2002). Mating takes place immediately after emergence from hibernation sites and females give birth to 3-15 young in mid to late summer depending on elevation (St. John 2002).

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Timmerman Walt	MTFWP		wtimmerman@mt.gov
Vaughn Mike	MTFWP		mvaughn@mt.gov
Waltee Dean	MTFWP		dwaltee@mt.gov
Warren Jeff	USFWS	(406) 276-3536	jeffrey_warren@fws.gov
Werner J. Kirwin	Salish Kootenai College	(406) 676-8988	jkw@ronan.net
Wrobleski David	USFS		dwrobleski@fs.fed.us

Site Data Form for Lentic Breeding Amphibian and Aquatic Reptile Surveys

Locality Information

Date		Observer(s)		Owner		Site Detection: Aerial Photo Topo Map NWI Map Incidental				GPS EPE	
DM Region SE MONTANA		QQUAD		Site Number		State		County		Map Name	
Locality						T		R		S	
Map Elevation		Datum		Latitude (DD)		Longitude (DD)				Survey Type 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	

Habitat Information

Begin Time		End Time		Total Person Minutes of Search				Site Overview Photo Taken <input type="checkbox"/> Photo Description(s)				
Site Dry: Y N		Site Origin: Beaver Water Depressional Manmade Other_____						Support Reproduction? Y N		GIS Mapping 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Habitat Type:		Lake/ Pond	Wetland/ Marsh	Bog/ Fen	Backwater/ Oxbow	Spring/ Seep	Active Beaver Pond	Inactive Beaver Pond	Site Multipooled	Ditch/ Puddle	Reservoir/ Stockpond	Well/ Tank
Weather: Clear Partly Cloudy Overcast Rain Snow				Wind: Calm Light Strong		Air Temp °C		Water Temp °C		Water pH		
Color: Clear Stained		Turbidity: Clear Cloudy		Water Connectedness: Permanent Temporary Isolated		Water Permanence: Permanent Temporary		Max Depth: < 1 M 1-2 M > 2 M		Percent of Site > 2 M 0 1-25 26-50 51-75 76-100		
Site Length:		Site Width:		Percentage of Site Searched: 1-25 26-50 51-75 76-100		Percent of Site at ≤ 50 cm Depth: 0 1-25 26-50 51-75 76-100		~ Emergent Veg Area (M ²)				
Percent of Site with Emergent Veg: 0 1-25 26-50 51-75 76-100				Percent of Site with Larval Activity: 0 1-25 26-50 51-75 76-100				Rank Emergent Vegetation Species in Order of Abundance: Sedges Grasses Cattails Rushes Water Lily Shrubs Other_____				
Primary Substrate of Shallows: Silt/Mud Sand Gravel Cobble Boulder/Bedrock				North Shoreline Characteristics: Shallows Present: Y N Emergent Veg Present: Y N				Distance (M) to Forest Edge:				
Grazing Impact None Light Heavy Structure Heavy Structure and Water Heavy Water						Water Dammed/Diverted Y N		Timber Harvest in Area Y N		Mining Activity Y N		
Other Human Impacts Or Modifications:						Fish Detected? Y N		Time at First Detection:		Fish Species If Identified:		
Fish Spawning Habitat Present? Y N U				Inlet Width:		Inlet Depth:		Inlet Substrate		Outlet Width		
								Outlet Depth		Outlet Substrate		

Species Information

Amphibian Species		Time at first detection	E L M J A	No. Egg Masses		5-20mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	
20-50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	>50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	Number Juveniles		Number Adults		
Tissue Number		Voucher Number		Breeding with Fish?	Y N	If breeding with fish is cover present?	Y N	
Amphibian Species		Time at first detection	E L M J A	No. Egg Masses		5-20mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	
20-50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	>50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	Number Juveniles		Number Adults		
Tissue Number		Voucher Number		Breeding with Fish?	Y N	If breeding with fish is cover present?	Y N	
Amphibian Species		Time at first detection	E L M J A	No. Egg Masses		5-20mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	
20-50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	>50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	Number Juveniles		Number Adults		
Tissue Number		Voucher Number		Breeding with Fish?	Y N	If breeding with fish is cover present?	Y N	
Amphibian Species		Time at first detection	E L M J A	No. Egg Masses		5-20mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	
20-50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	>50mm larvae	≤10 ≤100 ≤1000 ≤10K >10K	Number Juveniles		Number Adults		
Tissue Number		Voucher Number		Breeding with Fish?	Y N	If breeding with fish is cover present?	Y N	
Reptile Species		Time at first detection	E J A	Number Individuals		SVL in CM	Tissue Number	Voucher Number
Reptile Species		Time at first detection	E J A	Number Individuals		SVL in CM	Tissue Number	Voucher Number
Reptile Species		Time at first detection	E J A	Number Individuals		SVL in CM	Tissue Number	Voucher Number
Reptile Species		Time at first detection	E J A	Number Individuals	632	SVL in CM	Tissue Number	Voucher Number

Grid Scale:

A blank grid with a compass rose in the top right corner. The compass rose consists of the letter 'N' and an upward-pointing arrow, indicating North. The grid is composed of 15 columns and 15 rows.

Other Notes:

Detection Summary(list surveyors in left column & species detections in others (e.g., 1 @ 5 min) - list adults & breeding separately)

Detection Summary (not surveys in left column & species detections in birds (e.g., 1 @ 5 min) not adults & breeding separately)						
Surveyor						

Compass Bearing	70°	90°	110°	130°	150°	170°	633 190°	210°
Inclination (degrees)								

Definitions of Variables on Lentic Breeding Amphibian Survey Data Sheet

Locality Information

Date: Use MM-DD-YY format (e.g. 5/12/00 for May 12 of 2000).

Observers: List names or initials of individuals involved with survey of this site and circle the name of the recorder.

Owner: Use abbreviation of the government agency responsible for managing the land you surveyed. (e.g. USFS, BLM). If private land was surveyed list the owner's full name to indicate that you did not trespass.

Site Detection: Was site detected on aerial photo, topographic map, NWI map, or was it observed incidentally while in the field.

GPS EPE: The estimated positional error reported by the GPS receiver in meters.

Strata Number: The sample strata in which the 6th level HUC watershed lies (one of nine defined in western Montana).

HUC Number: The sample number of the 6th level HUC in one of the nine sample strata defined for western Montana.

Site Number: The number pre-assigned to the water body within each 6th level HUC. If the water body was not pre-assigned a number because it was not on topographic maps or aerial photos then assign it a sequential number and draw it on the topo map.

State: Use the two-letter abbreviation.

County: Use the full county name.

Map Name: List the name of the USGS 7.5-minute (1:24,000 scale) topographic quadrangle map.

Locality: Describe the specific geographic location of the site so that the type of site is described and the straight-line air distance from one or more permanent features on a 7.5-minute (1:24,000 scale) topographic map records the position of the site (e.g., Beaver pond, 1.5 miles south of Elephant Peak and 1.3 miles east of Engle Peak).

T: Record the Township number and whether it is north or south.

R: Record the Range number and whether it is east or west.

S: Record the Section number.

Section Description: Describe the location of the site at the ¼ of ¼ section level (e.g., SENE indicates SE corner of NE corner).

Map Elevation: The elevation of the site as indicated by the topographic map in feet (avoid using elevations from a GPS)

UTM Zone: Universal Transverse Mercator zone recorded on the topographic map. Use NAD 27 as the map and GPS datum.

UTM North: Universal Transverse Mercator northing coordinate in meters as recorded on the topographic map or GPS receiver. Be sure to note any major differences between UTM coordinates on the map and those on the GPS receiver.

UTM East: Universal Transverse Mercator easting coordinate in meters as recorded on the topographic map or GPS receiver. Be sure to note any major differences between UTM coordinates on the map and those on the GPS receiver.

Survey Type: Circle the appropriate number defined as follows: 0 = private land so site was not surveyed; 1 = site not surveyed due to logistics; 2 = site is a lotic spring/seep not worth future survey; 3 = lentic site that is worth future survey; 4 = misidentified as a potential lentic site on the aerial photograph or on the topographic map (e.g., a shadow from a tree or a talus slope) and not worth future survey; 5 = inactive beaver dam that now only has lotic habitat and is not worth future survey; 6 = only lotic habitat is present and the site is not worth future survey, but it appears possible that the meadow was an historic beaver dam complex; 7 = a lentic site because it would hold water for at least a short time period during wetter conditions, but it is not worth future survey because it would never hold enough water long enough to support amphibian reproduction; 8 = site is not worth future survey for some reason other than those listed above.

Habitat Information

Begin Time: List the time the survey began in 24-hour format.

End Time: List the time the survey ended in 24-hour format.

Total Person Minutes of Search: Record the total person minutes the site was searched (e.g. if one person surveys for 15 minutes and another surveys for 30 minutes, but takes 5 minutes to measure a specimen the total person minutes is 40 minutes).

Camera and Photo Number(s) / Description (s): Identify the camera and the number of the photo as viewed on the camera's view screen and a description of the contents of the photograph (e.g., 13 = 1 x ASMO larvae and 14 = 1 x habitat). Take photos of all portions of the site and anything else that may be of interest (e.g., areas with fish versus areas with amphibians).

Site Dry: Circle whether the site was dry or not at the time of the survey.

Site Origin: Circle whether the site origin is glacial, beaver, water (i.e., flooding or spring), depressional, manmade, or describe other origin.

Support Reproduction: Is site capable of supporting reproduction so it is worth resurveying (e.g. in wetter years if now dry)?

GIS Mapping: Circle the appropriate number defined as follows: 0 = site not surveyed; 1 = a 4 in the survey type and site is not worth future survey; 2 = a 2, 5, 6, or 8 in survey type and site is not worth future survey; 3 = 7 in survey type and site is not worth future survey; 4 = a 3 in the survey type and site is dry, but is worth future survey; 5 = a 3 in the survey type and site has ephemeral water and is worth future survey (including high elevation sites that freeze solid); 6 = a 3 in the survey type, site is worth future survey, has emergent vegetation, and has permanent water that lasts all summer long and does not freeze solid in the winter so that it is likely to support aquatic overwintering; 7 = a 3 in the survey type, site is worth future survey, does not have functional amounts of emergent vegetation, and has permanent water that lasts all summer long and does not freeze solid in the winter so that it is likely to support aquatic overwintering.

Habitat Type: Circle the appropriate habitat type of the site being surveyed. If site is multi-pooled water information does not need to be gathered for every pool, but you may wish to record this information on the map. If breeding activity is limited to one pool at a multi-pooled site water information should be recorded for this pool and this should be noted in the comments.

Weather: Circle weather condition during survey.

Wind: Circle wind condition during survey (> 20 mph winds should be classified as strong).

Air Temp: Record air temperature at chest height in the shade. Record temperature in Celsius. °C = (°F – 32)/1.8

Water Temp: Record water temperature where larvae or egg masses are observed or at 2 cm depth 1 meter from the margin of the water body. Record temperature in Celsius. °C = (°F – 32)/1.8

Water pH: Record water pH at the same location water temperature was recorded.

Color: Circle whether the water is clear or stained a tea or rust color from organic acids.

Turbidity: Circle whether water is clear or cloudy.

Water Connectedness: Circle if water body has permanent connection to flowing water (Permanent), is connected to flowing water for a temporary period each year (Temporary), or is never connected to flowing waters or other water bodies (Isolated).

Water Permanence: Circle whether the site contains water throughout the entire year (Permanent), or contains water for only a portion of the year (Temporary).

Max Depth: Circle the category corresponding to the maximum depth of the water body.

Percent of Site > 2 M: Circle the percentage of the site with water depth greater than 2 meters deep.

Site Length: The length of the longest dimension of the standing water body.

Site Width: The width of the second longest dimension of the standing water body.

Percentage of Site Searched: Circle the percentage of the site surveyed.

Percentage of the Site at ≤ 50 cm Depth: Circle the appropriate percentage.

Approximate Area with Emergent Veg (M^2): The approximate area of the site that contains emergent vegetation.

Percentage of Site with Emergent Veg: Circle the percentage of the entire site with emergent vegetation.

Percentage of Site with Larval Activity: Circle the percentage of the site where amphibian larvae were observed.

Rank Emergent Veg Species in Order of Abundance: Record the rank order of abundance in front of the 3 most prevalent emergent vegetation species. If the vegetation present is "other" indicate what it is.

Primary Substrate: Circle the substrate that covers the majority of the bottom of the site.

North Shoreline Characteristics: Circle whether shallows and emergent vegetation are present or absent on the north shoreline.

Distance (M) to Forest Edge: Record the closest distance between the water's edge and the forest margin in meters.

Grazing Impact: Circle the appropriate grazing category defined as follows: no grazing in vicinity of the site; grazing noted in the vicinity of the site, but no major impacts to wetland structure or water quality; heavy structural impacts to site (e.g., vegetation destroyed creating bare ground, hummocks, pugging, or altered hydroregime); heavy structural impacts and water quality impacted due to animal waste; and water quality impacted due to animal waste.

Water Dammed/Diverted: Circle whether or not water has been dammed or diverted at the site (including blow outs or pits).

Timber Harvest: Circle whether or not timber has been harvested within 200 meters of the site.

Mining Activity: Circle whether or not there is evidence of mining activity within 200 meters of the site.

Other Human Impacts or Modifications: Briefly describe if, how, and when the site has been altered by human activities. If the site has not been altered record none for not altered. If multiple anthropogenic impacts exist document all of these using the back of the data sheet if necessary and qualify approximate timing of impact (e.g., recent versus historic).

Fish Detected?: Circle whether or not fish were detected.

Time at First Detection: If fish were detected, indicate the time in total person minutes of survey when they were first detected.

Fish Species if Identified: List the fish species identified.

Fish Spawning Habitat Present?: Are shallow waters with adequate gravels/cobbles present that would allow salmonid fishes to spawn? An active search for fry is also a good idea.

Inlet Width: What is the average width of the inlet stream in meters?

Inlet Depth: What is the average depth of the inlet stream in centimeters?

Inlet Substrate: What is the primary substrate at the inlet stream (Silt/Mud, Sand, Gravel, Cobble, or Boulder/Bedrock)?

Outlet Width: What is the average width of the outlet stream in meters?

Outlet Depth: What is the average depth of the outlet stream in centimeters?

Outlet Substrate: What is the primary substrate at the outlet stream (Silt/Mud, Sand, Gravel, Cobble, or Boulder/Bedrock)?

Species Information

For each species record the first two letters of the scientific genus and species names for all amphibian and reptile species found at the site (e.g., BUBO for *Bufo boreas*). Record the total number of person minutes of survey required before each life history stage of each species was encountered beside the E (egg), L (larvae), M (metamorph), J (juvenile), or A (adult). Record the number or category of number of each of the specified life history and/or size classes. For amphibians indicate whether they have bred in the same water body where fish are present, and if they have, indicate whether there is protective cover (e.g., extensive shallows with emergent vegetation, a log barrier, talus). Record the tissue number or range of tissue numbers for tissue samples collected (see tissue collection protocols). If the animal was swabbed in preparation for testing the animal for chytrid infection indicate the chytrid sample number in the Tissue Number field. Record the preliminary museum voucher specimen number for voucher specimens collected (see voucher specimen collection protocols).

Site Map for Lentic Breeding Amphibian and Aquatic Reptile Surveys

General: Include a rough sketch of the site including the shape of the site and the shape and spatial relations of surrounding biotic and abiotic features. Indicate the area covered with emergent vegetation with cross-hatching. Indicate a 2-meter depth contour for the water body with a dashed line. Indicate the location where the water temperature was taken, the location where the GPS position was taken, the location where clinometer readings for southern exposure were taken, and the location of any photographs with an arrow indicating the direction in which the photo(s) were taken. Make sure that the orientation of the sketch (i.e. the north arrow) corresponds to the orientation of the site.

Grid Scale: Indicate the approximate scale of the grid lines relative to the site sketched in meters.

Other Notes: Include any other notes of interest in this space. Examples: (1) areas of highest larval density; (2) thoughts on why a species may not have been detected at a site; (3) problems associated with the survey of the site (e.g., dangerous boggy conditions); (4) If a site was dry would it support reproduction during wetter years.

Southern Exposure: From a site on along the northern shoreline that would most likely to be used as an oviposition or larval rearing area (e.g., shallow waters with emergent vegetation in the NW corner of the water body) record the degree inclination from your position to the skyline (e.g., mountain or solid tree line) at each of the eight compass bearings listed. Note that the compass bearings are true north so you will need to adjust your compass according to the map being used to correct for the deviation from magnetic north (15 to 19.5 degrees in western Montana).

Page ____ of ____

Roadside Amphibian Calling Survey Datasheet

Observer(s) _____

Start Lat/Long (DD) _____

End Lat/Long (DD) _____

Summary Comments on Survey Route _____

Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	
Date	Time	Weather	Latitude (DD)	Detection	Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)
			Longitude (DD)	Y / N	

636

Date

Time

Weather

Latitude (DD)

Detection

Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)

Longitude (DD)

Y / N

Date

Time

Weather

Latitude (DD)

Detection

Species Number, Bearing, & Distance to Chorus (e.g., 5 x BUWO at 230 degrees and 100 m)

Longitude (DD)

Y / N

Data Form for Reptile Site Surveys

Locality Information

DM Region SE MONTANA	QQUAD	Site No:	Locality:			
State:	County:	Map Name:	T	R	S	Section Description:
Owner:	Map Elevation:	FT	Datum	Latitude (DD)		Longitude (DD)

Habitat Information

Date:	Observer(s):	Begin Time:	End Time:	Total Person Minutes of Search:	Area (M ²) Searched:	
Percentage of Site Searched: 1-25 26-50 51-75 76-100		Percent Slope:	Aspect: N NE NW S SE SW E W Flat			
Habitat Cover Type As Percent of Site Surveyed:						
Cliff/Outcrop Bluff/Coulee Rim Talus Open Conifer Forest Open Mixed Forest Shrub/Steppe Grassland Other _____ _____ % _____ % _____ % _____ % _____ % _____ % _____ % _____ %						
Site Overview Photo Taken <input type="checkbox"/>				Air Temp: °C	Soil Temp: °C	
Photo Description(s)						
Weather: Clear Partly Cloudy Overcast Rain Snow			Wind: Calm Light Strong		Potential Hibernaculum Y N	
Soil Moisture: Dry Damp Wet Standing Water Snow			Dominant Substrate Type: Bedrock Compressed Soil Sand Detritus Gravel (<4 cm diameter) Cobble (4-30cm diameter) Boulder (>30 cm diameter)			
Habitat Description/Threats:						

Reptile Species Information

Species:	Number and Time at First Detection (e.g., 2 x juveniles, 25 cm TL @ 10 minutes)	Cover Type at Animal's Location:
Tissue Number (e.g., MTHP5533)	Substrate Association of Animal (Circle):	
Voucher Number & Description:	under wood on/under 4-20cm rock fragments on/under >20cm rock fragments in vegetation on leaf litter in rock fracture Other _____	
Species:	Number and Time at First Detection (e.g., 2 x juveniles, 25 cm TL @ 10 minutes)	Cover Type at Animal's Location:
Tissue Number (e.g., MTHP5533)	Substrate Association of Animal (Circle):	
Voucher Number & Description:	under wood on/under 4-20cm rock fragments on/under >20cm rock fragments in vegetation on leaf litter in rock fracture Other _____	
Species:	Number and Time at First Detection (e.g., 2 x juveniles, 25 cm TL @ 10 minutes)	Cover Type at Animal's Location:
Tissue Number (e.g., MTHP5533)	Substrate Association of Animal (Circle):	
Voucher Number & Description:	under wood on/under 4-20cm rock fragments on/under >20cm rock fragments in vegetation on leaf litter in rock fracture Other _____	
Species:	Number and Time at First Detection (e.g., 2 x juveniles, 25 cm TL @ 10 minutes)	Cover Type at Animal's Location:
Tissue Number (e.g., MTHP5533)	Substrate Association of Animal (Circle):	
Voucher Number & Description:	under wood on/under 4-20cm rock fragments on/under >20cm rock fragments in vegetation on leaf litter in rock fracture Other _____	

Grid Scale:

A blank grid with a north arrow in the top right corner. The grid is 15 columns wide and 15 rows high. A north arrow is located in the top right corner, pointing upwards and slightly to the right. The arrow is labeled with a large 'N' and an upward-pointing arrowhead.

Other Notes:

Surveyor						
			639			

Definitions of Variables on Reptile Site Survey Form

Site Information

Strata Number: The sample strata in which the 6th level HUC watershed lies.

HUC Number: The sample number of the 6th level HUC.

Site No: Identify three digit number of the site being surveyed within each sampling block (range 001-999).

Locality: Describe the specific geographic location of the site so that the type of site is described and the straight-line air distance from one or more permanent features on a 7.5-minute (1:24,000 scale) topographic map records the position of the site (e.g., Large talus slope 1.5 miles north of Engle Peak, N side of FS Road 225).

State: Use the two-letter abbreviation.

County: Use the full county name.

Map Name: List the name of the USGS 7.5-minute (1:24,000 scale) topographic quadrangle map.

T: Record the Township number and whether it is north or south.

R: Record the Range number and whether it is east or west.

S: Record the Section number

Section Description: Describe location of the site at the ¼ of ¼ section level (e.g., SENE indicates SE corner of NE corner).

Owner: Use abbreviation of the government agency responsible for managing the land you surveyed. (e.g. USFS, BLM). If private land was surveyed list the owner's full name to indicate that you did not trespass.

Map Elevation: The elevation of the site as indicated by the topographic map in feet (avoid using elevations from a GPS)

Datum: The map datum used (typically NAD 27 if off topographic map or WGS84 if off GPS unit on standard setting).

UTM Zone: Universal Transverse Mercator zone recorded on the topographic map.

UTM East: Universal Transverse Mercator easting coordinate in meters as recorded on the topographic map or GPS receiver. Be sure to note any major differences between UTM coordinates on the map and those on the GPS receiver.

UTM North: Universal Transverse Mercator northing coordinate in meters as recorded on the topographic map or GPS receiver. Be sure to note any major differences between UTM coordinates on the map and those on the GPS receiver.

Survey Information

Date: Use MM-DD-YY format (e.g. 05/12/00 for May 12 of 2000).

Observers: List names or initials of individuals involved with survey of this site and circle the name of the recorder.

Begin Time: List the time the survey began in 24-hour format.

End Time: List the time the survey ended in 24-hour format.

Total Person Minutes of Search: Record the total person minutes the site was searched (e.g. if one person surveys for 15 minutes and another surveys for 30 minutes, but takes 5 minutes to measure a specimen the total person minutes is 40 minutes).

Area (M²) Searched: Area in square meters that was surveyed.

Percent of Site Searched: Circle the appropriate category.

Percent Slope: Percent slope of site. Enter range if variable.

Aspect: Circle primary aspect of the site.

Habitat Cover Type as Percent of Site Surveyed: Identify percent composition of each habitat type within site surveyed.

Photo Frame Number(s) / Descriptions: The number of the photo as viewed on the camera's view screen and a description of the contents of the photograph (e.g., #13 = 1 x Milksnake and #14-18 = 5 x habitat). Take photos of all portions of the site and anything else that may be of interest (e.g., reptile species, potential site threats).

Air Temp: Record air temperature in °C at chest height in the shade. °C = (°F – 32)/1.8

Soil Temp: Record soil temperature in °C at 10 cm depth. °C = (°F – 32)/1.8

Weather: Circle weather condition during survey.

Wind: Circle wind condition during survey (> 20 mph winds should be classified as strong).

Potential Hibernacula: Does the site contain suitable underground refugia (e.g., talus, caves) to support overwintering.

Soil Moisture: Circle the appropriate category.

Dominant Substrate Type: Circle the appropriate category.

Habitat Description/Threats: Note the most prominent characteristics of the site with relation to reptiles (e.g., could the site support overwintering). Also note habitat threats from grazing, logging, mining, flooding, road building, weeds, fire, etc.

Species Information

For each species record the first two letters of the scientific genus and species names for all amphibian and reptile species found at the site (e.g., COCO for *Coluber constrictor*). Record the total number of person minutes of survey required before each life history stage of each species was encountered and the size or size range of the animals encountered. Record the tissue number or range of tissue numbers for tissue samples collected (see tissue collection protocols). Record the preliminary museum voucher specimen number for voucher specimens collected (see voucher specimen collection protocols). Circle the substrate the animal was associated with at time of detection. Record the presence of other species detected at the site (e.g., millipedes), the time at first detection, and the voucher number and description of animals collected (see voucher and tissue collection protocols).

